



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

Raised Bill No. 168

LCO No. 1614



Referred to Committee on HOUSING

Introduced by:
(HSG)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A RIGHT TO HOUSING.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2022*) (a) It shall be the goal of
2 this state to implement policies that will respect, protect and fulfill a
3 right to affordable, decent, safe and stable housing for every resident of
4 this state.

5 (b) Each state agency, as defined in section 1-79 of the general
6 statutes, and each political subdivision of the state, in implementing the
7 provisions of this section, shall:

8 (1) Consider the right to housing under subsection (a) of this section
9 and the components of such right set forth in subsection (c) of this
10 section when adopting or revising policies, regulations or grant criteria
11 that implicate, impact or affect such right;

12 (2) When implementing such policies, regulations or grant criteria,
13 give priority to assisting families of low and moderate income, as
14 defined in section 8-39 of the general statutes, in the state; and

15 (3) To the extent practicable, attempt to serve households currently
16 experiencing homelessness or at risk of housing loss and those in the
17 lower range of the income group to which the agency's or political
18 subdivision's programs are directed.

19 (c) The right to housing includes, but is not limited to, the following
20 components:

21 (1) The right to protection from housing loss: This right implicates
22 governmental programs that ensure the legal security of persons and
23 households at risk of losing housing or experiencing homelessness,
24 including eviction prevention programs, legal assistance in evictions,
25 financial assistance, support services and problem-solving counseling;

26 (2) The right to safe housing that meets all basic needs: This right
27 implicates the internal habitability of the home as well as the necessary
28 services and infrastructure to support a healthy and dignified standard
29 of living;

30 (3) The right to housing and affordability: This right implicates
31 governmental programs that provide rental assistance, encourage the
32 maintenance, repair and rehabilitation of existing housing and enlarge
33 the stock of new low-cost housing, all of which ensure the ability to
34 secure and maintain housing without risking access to other essential
35 needs;

36 (4) The right to rehousing assistance for persons and households that
37 have become homeless: This right implicates governmental programs
38 that support the transition of persons experiencing homelessness to
39 long-term permanent housing that is affordable; and

40 (5) The right to recognition of special circumstances: This right
41 implicates the adaptation of governmental programs to ensure
42 accessibility to households facing particular obstacles to finding
43 affordable, decent, safe and stable housing, whether because of race,
44 religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability,
45 unemployment, criminal record, eviction history, family status, source

46 of income, immigration status, cultural traditions, having been victims
47 of fraud and financial manipulation or other obstacles.

48 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a right to
49 housing committee to review existing and proposed housing policies
50 and advise on (1) the state's implementation of a right to housing; and
51 (2) gaps and needs of vulnerable populations with regard to access to
52 permanent housing, including, but not limited to, (A) individuals
53 experiencing homelessness, including homeless youth, individuals with
54 disabilities, including physical disabilities and disabilities related to
55 mental health, substance abuse and developmental conditions; (B)
56 individuals with past or current criminal justice system involvement;
57 (C) individuals from historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups;
58 (D) individuals from historically marginalized groups based on sexual
59 orientation, gender identity or gender expression; (E) survivors of
60 sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual
61 trafficking; (F) refugees and immigrants; and (G) veterans.

62 (b) The committee shall consist of the following members:

63 (1) Three appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
64 one with expertise in homelessness policies and programs, one with
65 expertise in low-income housing policies and programs and one with
66 expertise in matters relating to evictions and housing court;

67 (2) Three appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one
68 with expertise in fair housing protections, one with expertise in the
69 development of low-income housing and one with expertise in, or
70 personal experience with, disability and housing insecurity;

71 (3) Three appointed by the majority leader of the House of
72 Representatives, one with expertise in, or personal experience with, the
73 criminal justice impact on housing insecurity, one with expertise in, or
74 personal experience with, the impact of race or ethnicity on housing
75 insecurity and one with expertise in, or personal experience with, the
76 impact of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression on

77 housing insecurity;

78 (4) Three appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one with
79 expertise in, or personal experience with, the impact of sexual violence,
80 domestic violence, dating violence or stalking on housing insecurity,
81 one with experience in, or personal experience with, the impact of sex
82 trafficking and housing insecurity and one with expertise in, or personal
83 experience with, the impact of refugee or immigrant status on housing
84 insecurity;

85 (5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of
86 Representatives, one with expertise in, or personal experience with, the
87 impact on veteran status on housing insecurity and one of whom is a
88 current or recent recipient of homeless assistance, low-income housing
89 assistance or assistance in an eviction or housing summary process
90 matter;

91 (6) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, both of whom
92 are current or recent recipients of homeless assistance, low-income
93 housing assistance or assistance in an eviction or housing summary
94 process matter; and

95 (7) The Commissioner of Housing, or the commissioner's designee.

96 (c) Any member of the committee appointed under subdivision (1),
97 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member
98 of the General Assembly.

99 (d) All initial appointments to the committee shall be made not later
100 than sixty days after the effective date of this section. Appointed
101 members of the committee shall serve for three-year terms which shall
102 commence on the date of appointment and may serve until a successor
103 is appointed. Any vacancy shall be filled by the respective appointing
104 authority pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

105 (e) The chairperson of the committee shall be jointly appointed by the
106 speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore

107 of the Senate. Upon appointment of such chairperson, the work of the
108 committee may begin even if all other appointments have not yet been
109 made. The chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the committee,
110 which shall be held not later than ninety days after the effective date of
111 this section. If appointments under subsection (b) of this section are not
112 made within the sixty-day period required under subsection (d) of this
113 section, the chairperson may designate individuals with the required
114 expertise to serve on the committee until appointments are made
115 pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

116 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
117 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to housing
118 shall serve as the administrative staff of the committee.

119 (g) The committee shall meet not less than twice per fiscal year.

120 (h) The Department of Housing shall provide presentations and data
121 regarding its implementation of the right to housing at the request of
122 the committee.

123 (i) Not later than July 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, the committee
124 shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint
125 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
126 matters relating to housing, in accordance with the provisions of section
127 11-4a of the general statutes.

128 (j) During any regular or special session of the General Assembly, the
129 committee shall identify and review any proposed legislation impacting
130 the right to housing and may provide testimony on any such proposals
131 given a public hearing before any relevant committees of the General
132 Assembly, providing analysis on the potential impact of the legislation
133 on the right to housing and the vulnerable populations described in
134 subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section to preserve such right.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

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| Section 1 | <i>October 1, 2022</i> | New section |
| Sec. 2 | <i>from passage</i> | New section |

HSG *Joint Favorable*