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 this state to implement policies that will respect, protect and fulfill a right to affordable, decent, safe and stable housing for every resident of this state.

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

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

(2) When implementing such policies, regulations or grant criteria, give priority to assisting families of low and moderate income, as defined in section 8-39 of the general statutes, in the state; and
(3) To the extent practicable, attempt to serve households currently experiencing homelessness or at risk of housing loss and those in the lower range of the income group to which the agency’s or political subdivision's programs are directed.

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

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

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

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

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

(5) The right to recognition of special circumstances: This right implicates the adaptation of governmental programs to ensure accessibility to households facing particular obstacles to finding affordable, decent, safe and stable housing, whether because of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, unemployment, criminal record, eviction history, family status, source
of income, immigration status, cultural traditions, having been victims of fraud and financial manipulation or other obstacles.

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

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

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

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

(3) Three appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, one with expertise in, or personal experience with, the criminal justice impact on housing insecurity, one with expertise in, or personal experience with, the impact of race or ethnicity on housing insecurity and one with expertise in, or personal experience with, the impact of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression on housing insecurity;
(4) Three appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one with expertise in, or personal experience with, the impact of sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence or stalking on housing insecurity, one with experience in, or personal experience with, the impact of sex trafficking and housing insecurity and one with expertise in, or personal experience with, the impact of refugee or immigrant status on housing insecurity;

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

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

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

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

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

(e) The chairperson of the committee shall be jointly appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate. Upon appointment of such chairperson, the work of the committee may begin even if all other appointments have not yet been
made. The chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the committee, which shall be held not later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. If appointments under subsection (b) of this section are not made within the sixty-day period required under subsection (d) of this section, the chairperson may designate individuals with the required expertise to serve on the committee until appointments are made pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

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

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

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

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

(j) During any regular or special session of the General Assembly, the committee shall identify and review any proposed legislation impacting the right to housing and may provide testimony on any such proposals given a public hearing before any relevant committees of the General Assembly, providing analysis on the potential impact of the legislation on the right to housing and the vulnerable populations described in 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1</th>
<th>October 1, 2022</th>
<th>New section</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sec. 2</td>
<td>from passage</td>
<td>New section</td>
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Statement of Purpose:
To establish a right to housing for all residents of the state and a right to housing committee.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]