



Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness

SOI bill testimony- MI House Judiciary Committee

Good morning and thank you Committee Chair Breen, and Committee members for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Lisa Chapman, and I am the Director of Public Policy for the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, a statewide nonprofit and membership organization. I am also representing the Coalition for Expanding Housing Access, which is a statewide workgroup of over 120 housing advocates and organizations.

We have been working on source of income protection and its impact during three legislative sessions now and are extremely grateful that the MI legislature is examining this issue.

As we know, Michigan is severely lacking in **affordable housing supply** and has been **losing ground for decades**.

For many persons with extremely low incomes, the path to access safe and affordable housing is through housing subsidies – such as the federal government’s largest rental housing assistance program, the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) (or former Section 8) program administered by Michigan’s Public Housing Authorities.

According to research done in 2021 by the national Center for Budget and Policy priorities, Vouchers have been shown to sharply reduce homelessness and other hardships, lift more than a million people above the poverty line, and give families more choices about where to live. Vouchers are also linked to educational, developmental, and health benefits that can improve adults’ well-being and health, and children’s long-term outcomes, while reducing costs in other public programs.

Vouchers and other forms of rental assistance can be a lifeline for people who are struggling to get back on their feet. An Urban Institute study in 2022 found that source of income protections helped families access low-

poverty neighborhoods. However, the program only works when landlords are willing to rent to voucher holders.

Source of income is **not protected** currently under the Federal Fair Housing act, nor the Michigan Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

Outside of the 15 cities in MI with SOI laws, landlords around the state can **still refuse applicants based solely on their source of income.**

Those who receive vouchers are disproportionately members of protected classes under Federal and state Fair Housing laws, suggesting bias against Voucher recipients may be proxy for other forms of discrimination people face in the overall housing system.

Both landlords and tenants benefit from SOI protections. For MI to increase the housing supply statewide, LLs have a vital role to play as partners in providing affordable housing as a valuable resource in our communities.

We ask that this significant legislation for housing justice & protection for low-income renters be favorably voted out of committee and enacted into law.

Thank you for your time today and for elevating the importance of housing for all Michiganders.

(For context Extremely Low-Income threshold in Ingham County is \$18,600 for one person and \$27,750 for Household of four)

<https://www.nhlp.org/wp-content/uploads/Source-of-Income-Discrimination-and-Fair-Housing-Policy-by-Tighe-and.pdf>