

AIDS Foundation OF CHICAGO

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Support HB 4439

Preventing Housing Discrimination Based on Source of Income

HB 4439 (Yarbrough) amends the Illinois Human Rights Act by adding a new category of persons protected from discrimination in residential rental transactions: legal source of income. HB 4439 does not prohibit landlords from using other existing criteria to screen tenants, including rent payment history and references.

HB 4439 will prohibit landlords from denying a lease to an individual solely because they use a public subsidy—including HOPWA—to pay their rent.

- In Illinois, over 400,000 families, persons with disabilities and senior citizens rely heavily on some form of non-wage income to obtain safe, decent and affordable housing. Non-wage income includes any lawful income, subsidy or benefit, including HOPWA, SSI, SSD, TANF, child support, and any other federal, state or local public assistance, or rental assistance program.
- Throughout Illinois, nearly 1,000 people living with HIV/AIDS depend on the federal Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program or other AIDS-related assistance to pay for their housing.
- In a survey of HIV/AIDS housing recipients conducted by the AIDS Foundation of Chicago in 1999, 38% of the respondents felt they had been discriminated against primarily due to source of income.

HB 4439 will help alleviate the affordable housing crisis by giving people with the ability to pay rent additional housing options.

- Many low-income people with the ability to pay rent are unable to access safe and affordable housing because landlords can discriminate against renters based on their source of income and refuse to rent to them.
- Access to safe and affordable housing is critical to ensure the health and medical stability of people living with HIV/AIDS.

For more information on this issue, please contact Karen A. Reitan at 312-922-2322 or kreitan@aidschicago.org.