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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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H.B. 135
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Upchurch and Lawson-Rowe

Austin C. Strohacker, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Prohibits discrimination in rental housing based on a tenant's or prospective tenant's lawful source of income, including housing assistance and public benefits.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

The bill adds provisions to Ohio's Fair Housing Law that prohibit landlords from taking certain actions based on a tenant's or prospective tenant's source of income.

Lawful source of income

The bill defines "lawful source of income" as a verifiable source of money, paid directly or indirectly to the tenant or prospective tenant, including (1) income derived from a profession or occupation, (2) assistance through private grant or loan programs, and (3) payments, benefits, or subsidies from government programs.

All of the following government payments, benefits, and subsidies expressly qualify as a "lawful source of income" under the bill: federal low-income housing assistance, the Ohio Works First Program, grants and loans administered by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, Medicaid, veterans benefits, benefits under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administered by the Department of Job and Family Services, the special SNAP program for women, infants, and children administered by the Department of Health, and Social Security.¹

Prohibited actions

The bill prohibits landlords from taking any of the following actions based on a tenant's or prospective tenant's lawful source of income:

¹ R.C. 4112.01(A)(26).

- Refusing to rent, lease, or sublease housing accommodations;
- Refusing use of common areas and facilities in housing accommodations;
- Serving a notice of termination of tenancy;
- Commencing an eviction action on grounds not authorized by law;
- Representing that housing accommodations are not available for inspection or rental when they are, in fact, available;
- Requiring different terms for inspection or rental of housing accommodations;
- Making, printing, or publishing any advertisements, statements, applications, or contracts indicating a preference, limitation, or discrimination;
- Otherwise denying or withholding housing accommodations.²

Under continuing law, a violation of the Fair Housing Law can be enforced by either the Ohio Civil Rights Commission or a private civil action, and result in the imposition of a civil penalty or an award of damages, injunctive relief, or any other appropriate relief.³

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	02-25-25

ANHB0135IN-136/ts.

² R.C. 4112.02(H)(23) through (25).

³ R.C. 4112.05, 4112.051, 4112.052, and 4112.99, not in the bill.