

Social problems are far more difficult to cope with since poverty, prejudice, lack of educational opportunity, and unemployment demand more than short-term solutions and placebo programs. The 1967 General Assembly achieved a commendable record in the area of human rights, a record I hope we can expand upon in 1968. Last year the Legislature rescinded Maryland's archaic antimiscegenation law and extended our public accommodations statute. In addition, the administration inaugurated the Crash Jobs Program and promulgated an executive Code of Fair Practices. The Code implements in precise detail present general laws which prohibit discrimination in State employment and limit State contracts to those private firms which observe nondiscriminatory employment practices.

This year we must move ahead. We must expand our public accommodation statutes to assure that all citizens have the right to be served by any commercial enterprise professing to serve the general public.

We must also move to assure more adequate low-cost housing for all our citizens, not only to relieve the impaction and slums of Maryland's urban areas, but to aid the elderly living on a fixed, limited income and even the moderate income family whose standard of living is threatened by the inflationary spiral.

Safe and decent housing is essential to human dignity. High interest rates, land and construction costs have limited the availability of low and moderate income housing. Legislation will be introduced to authorize a State Housing Development Fund to encourage the construction of this desperately needed type of housing. Grants from this revolving fund, in the form of interest-bearing advances or mortgage insurance, would be made to sponsors complying with State regulations on rentals, profit, occupancy, dividends and disposition of the property. A State Housing Authority would be created to administer the program, but final approval of all grants and insurance contracts would rest with the Board of Public Works.

In addition, I shall propose a Statewide Housing Code establishing minimum health and safety standards as recommended by the Governor's Commission on Housing Standards.

It is highly desirable that you address yourselves again this year to one of the most challenging moral issues of our time — capital punishment. Although opinion is strongly divided, social maturity and compelling professional thought call for the repeal of our laws allowing this form of punishment. However, many of us are not prepared to