

SENATE BILL 717

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2000 Regular Session  
(01r2271)

**ENROLLED BILL**  
*-- Judicial Proceedings/Economic Matters --*

Introduced by **Senator McFadden (Baltimore City Administration) and  
Senators Hughes and Mitchell**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this  
\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock, \_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President.

CHAPTER 301

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Real Property - Abatement of Nuisance - Controlled Dangerous Substances**

3 FOR the purpose of clarifying that under provisions of law that relate to nuisance  
4 abatement, an "owner" includes an owner-occupant and a "tenant" does not  
5 include the owner of the property; requiring a plaintiff who brings a certain  
6 nuisance abatement action to post a certain notice in a conspicuous place on the  
7 property on which the nuisance is located within a certain amount of time before  
8 the hearing; authorizing the court, after a hearing, to order a tenant who knew  
9 or should have known of the existence of certain nuisances to vacate the  
10 property within a certain amount of time; clarifying that in certain nuisance  
11 abatement actions the court may, after a hearing, grant a judgment of  
12 restitution or the possession of rental property to the property owner if certain  
13 conditions are met; clarifying that a court may order an owner of certain  
14 property to submit for court approval a certain plan of correction in addition to  
15 or as part of any injunction, restraining order, or other relief ordered by the  
16 court; authorizing the court to impose certain additional sanctions if an owner

1 fails to comply with an order to abate a nuisance; ~~authorizing the court to award~~  
 2 ~~court costs and reasonable attorney's fees to a prevailing plaintiff in certain~~  
 3 ~~nuisance abatement actions~~; requiring that certain requests for oral arguments  
 4 be filed within a certain amount of time; requiring that certain oral arguments  
 5 be heard within a certain amount of time; providing that certain provisions of  
 6 law are not applicable to certain nuisance abatement actions; repealing certain  
 7 expedited notice and appeal requirements; and generally relating to the  
 8 abatement of nuisances based on the manufacture, distribution, or storage of  
 9 controlled dangerous substances or controlled paraphernalia.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
 11 Article - Real Property  
 12 Section 14-120  
 13 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 14 (1996 Replacement Volume and 1999 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
 16 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article - Real Property**

18 14-120.

19 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

20 (2) "Community association" means:

21 (i) A nonprofit association, corporation, or other organization that  
 22 is:

23 1. Comprised of residents of a community within which a  
 24 nuisance is located;

25 2. Operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare  
 26 and general neighborhood improvement and enhancement; and

27 3. Exempt from taxation under § 501(c)(3) or (4) of the  
 28 Internal Revenue Code; or

29 (ii) A nonprofit association, corporation, or other organization that  
 30 is:

31 1. Comprised of residents of a contiguous community that is  
 32 defined by specific geographic boundaries, within which a nuisance is located; and

33 2. Operated for the promotion of the welfare, improvement  
 34 and enhancement of that community.

1 (3) "Controlled dangerous substances" has the meaning stated in Article  
2 27, § 279(a) and (b) of the Code.

3 (4) "Nuisance" means a property that is used:

4 (i) By persons who assemble for the specific purpose of illegally  
5 administering a controlled dangerous substance;

6 (ii) For the illegal manufacture, or distribution of:

7 1. A controlled dangerous substance; or

8 2. Controlled paraphernalia, as defined in Article 27, §  
9 287(d) of the Code; or

10 (iii) For the illegal storage or concealment of a controlled dangerous  
11 substance in sufficient quantity to reasonably indicate under all the circumstances an  
12 intent to manufacture, distribute, or dispense:

13 1. A controlled dangerous substance; or

14 2. Controlled paraphernalia, as defined in Article 27, §  
15 287(d) of the Code.

16 (5) "OWNER" INCLUDES AN OWNER-OCCUPANT.

17 [(5)] (6) "Property" includes a mobile home.

18 [(6)] (7) (i) "Tenant" means the lessee or a person occupying property,  
19 whether or not a party to a lease.

20 (ii) "Tenant" includes a lessee or a person occupying a mobile home,  
21 whether or not a party to a lease.

22 (iii) "Tenant" does not include:

23 1. THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY; OR

24 2. [a] A mobile home owner who leases or rents a site for  
25 residential use and resides in a mobile home park.

26 (b) An action under § 4-401 of the Courts Article to abate a nuisance may be  
27 brought by:

28 (1) The State's Attorney of the county in which the nuisance is located;

29 (2) The county attorney or solicitor of the county in which the nuisance is  
30 located; or

31 (3) A community association within whose boundaries the nuisance is  
32 located.

1 (c) (1) An action may not be brought under this section concerning a  
2 commercial property until 45 days after the tenant, if any, and owner of record receive  
3 notice from a person entitled to bring an action under this section that a nuisance  
4 exists.

5 (2) The notice shall specify:

6 (i) The date and time of day the nuisance was first discovered; and

7 (ii) The location on the property where the nuisance is allegedly  
8 occurring.

9 (3) The notice shall be:

10 (i) Hand delivered to the tenant, if any, and the owner of record; or

11 (ii) Sent by certified mail to the tenant, if any, and the owner of  
12 record.

13 (d) (1) In addition to any service of process required by the Maryland Rules,  
14 the plaintiff shall cause to be posted in a conspicuous place on the property [within]  
15 NO LATER THAN 48 hours [of filing the complaint] BEFORE THE HEARING the notice  
16 required under paragraph (2) of this subsection.

17 (2) The notice shall indicate:

18 (i) The nature of the proceedings;

19 (ii) The time and place of the hearing; and

20 (iii) The name and telephone number of the person to contact for  
21 additional information.

22 (e) The court may issue an injunction or order other equitable relief whether  
23 or not an adequate remedy exists at law.

24 (f) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and in addition to or as a  
25 component of any remedy ordered under subsection (e) of this section, the court, after  
26 a hearing, may order a tenant [with knowledge] WHO KNEW OR SHOULD HAVE  
27 KNOWN of the existence of the nuisance to vacate the property within 72 hours.

28 (2) The court, after a hearing, may grant a judgment of restitution or the  
29 possession of [the] RENTAL property to the owner if:

30 (i) The owner and [lessee] TENANT are parties to the action; and

31 (ii) A tenant has failed to obey an order under subsection (e) of this  
32 section or paragraph (1) of this subsection.

33 (3) If the court orders restitution of the possession of the property under  
34 paragraph (2) of this subsection, the court shall immediately issue its warrant to the

1 sheriff or constable commanding execution of the warrant within 5 days after  
2 issuance of the warrant.

3 (4) [The] IN ADDITION TO OR AS A PART OF ANY INJUNCTION,  
4 RESTRAINING ORDER, OR OTHER RELIEF ORDERED, THE court may order the owner of  
5 the property to submit for court approval a plan of correction to ensure, to the extent  
6 reasonably possible, that the property will not again be used for a nuisance if:

7 (i) The owner is a party to the action; and

8 (ii) The owner knew OR SHOULD HAVE KNOWN ~~OR SHOULD HAVE~~  
9 ~~KNOWN~~ of the existence of the nuisance.

10 (5) IF AN OWNER FAILS TO COMPLY WITH AN ORDER TO ABATE A  
11 NUISANCE, AFTER A HEARING THE COURT MAY, IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER RELIEF  
12 GRANTED, ORDER: THAT THE PROPERTY BE DEMOLISHED IF THE PROPERTY IS  
13 UNFIT FOR HABITATION AND THE ESTIMATED COST OF REHABILITATION  
14 SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS THE ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE OF THE PROPERTY  
15 AFTER REHABILITATION.

16 ~~(I) THAT ALL TENANTS VACATE THE PROPERTY;~~

17 ~~(II) THAT THE PROPERTY REMAIN UNOCCUPIED, CLEAN, AND~~  
18 ~~SECURE AGAINST ENTRY DURING THE LIFE OF THE ORDER;~~

19 ~~(III) THAT THE PROPERTY BE REHABILITATED TO COMPLY WITH~~  
20 ~~APPLICABLE BUILDING CODES AND ORDINANCES; OR~~

21 ~~(IV) THAT THE PROPERTY BE DEMOLISHED IF THE ESTIMATED~~  
22 ~~COST OF REHABILITATION SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS THE ESTIMATED MARKET~~  
23 ~~VALUE OF THE PROPERTY AFTER REHABILITATION.~~

24 (g) Except as provided in subsection (f)(1) and (4) of this section, the court may  
25 order appropriate relief under subsections (e) and (f) of this section without proof that  
26 a defendant knew of the existence of the nuisance.

27 (h) In any action brought under this section:

28 (1) Evidence of the general reputation of the property is admissible to  
29 corroborate testimony based on personal knowledge or observation, or evidence seized  
30 during the execution of a search and seizure warrant, but shall not, in and of itself, be  
31 sufficient to establish the existence of a nuisance under this section; and

32 (2) Evidence that the nuisance had been discontinued at the time of the  
33 filing of the complaint or at the time of the hearing does not bar the imposition of  
34 appropriate relief by the court under subsections (e) and (f) of this section.

35 (i) The court may award court costs and reasonable attorney's fees to a  
36 {community association that is the} prevailing plaintiff in an action brought under  
37 this section.

1 (j) An action under this section shall be heard within 14 days after service of  
2 process on the parties.

3 (k) This section does not abrogate any equitable or legal right or remedy under  
4 existing law to abate a nuisance.

5 (l) (1) An appeal from a judgment or order under this section shall be filed  
6 within 10 days after the date of the order or judgment.

7 [(2) (i) Upon motion of either party, the circuit court shall set a date for  
8 the hearing of the appeal, which shall be not less than 5 or more than 15 days after  
9 the date the motion is filed.

10 (ii) Notice of the order for a hearing shall be served on the opposite  
11 party or the party's attorney at least 20 days before the hearing.]

12 (2) IF EITHER PARTY FILES A REQUEST FOR ORAL ARGUMENT, THE  
13 COURT SHALL HEAR THE ORAL ARGUMENT WITHIN 7 DAYS AFTER THE REQUEST IS  
14 FILED.

15 (3) (I) IF THE APPELLANT FILES A REQUEST FOR ORAL ARGUMENT,  
16 THE REQUEST SHALL BE FILED AT THE TIME OF THE FILING OF THE APPEAL.

17 (II) IF THE APPELLEE FILES A REQUEST FOR ORAL ARGUMENT,  
18 THE REQUEST SHALL BE FILED WITHIN 2 DAYS OF RECEIVING NOTICE OF THE  
19 APPEAL.

20 (M) PROVISIONS OF THE REAL PROPERTY ARTICLE OR PUBLIC LOCAL LAWS  
21 APPLICABLE TO ACTIONS BETWEEN A LANDLORD AND TENANT ARE NOT  
22 APPLICABLE TO ACTIONS BROUGHT AGAINST A LANDLORD OR A TENANT UNDER  
23 THIS SECTION.

24 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
25 October 1, 2000.