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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 19, 2020

RE: Testimony for HB 797 State Court Administrator - Warrants of Restitution and Writs of Possession - Data Collection and Reporting.

Good Afternoon Judiciary Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

For the record I am Delegate Regina T. Boyce here to testify on HB 797 State Court Administrator - Warrants of Restitution and Writs of Possession - Data Collection and Reporting (Eviction Data).

HB797 requires the State Court Administrator to collect, maintain, and provide on a certain date certain data regarding warrants of restitution and writs of possession beginning January 2021 with reporting to begin July 1, 2021. Beyond the number of filings occurring in a given day, month or year, HB797 requires the Administrator to collect specific information from warrants of restitution or writs of possession as well as requires additional data sets to be added to the failure to pay rent form to begin collection of those data sets.

In Maryland, we have a snapshot of how many "landlord-tenant" filings occur yearly, 650,000. Of those yearly filings, 250,000 are writs and from that number 22,000 evictions actually occur. While this information provides the quantity needed to begin assessments, the information doesn't provide the quality of data needed to get into the specifics: the people and places directly affected by eviction.

Housing as it relates to community stability is a necessary component of any town, city, county and state. To begin conversations and convene necessary stakeholders to create and improve policies, and appropriate expenditures needed to address our housing crisis, we must have data about eviction. When is the eviction happening, where is it happening, and to whom is it happening to. Without these specifics, we are creating inefficient programs, and wasting funding on the wrong solutions for a growing problem in our state and our country: housing insecurity and homelessness.

I understand that Maryland Courts are working on an electronic system due to come online in the next year and a half. While I am thankful for this much needed long overdue technology, I push to say that we all, regardless of our limitations, have an obligation to create efficiencies in the interim to make up for our lack.

Thank you for the time and opportunity to begin this hearing on a critically important topic: eviction. I ask for a favorable report.

Regina T. Boyce, Delegate