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BILL NO.: Senate Bill 279

TITLE: Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund - Alteration

SPONSOR: Senator Hettleman

COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 9, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 279 – Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund - Alteration. This legislation would establish funding for Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund by including money from the enforcement of the Maryland Consumer Protection Act.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, families have struggled more than ever to meet their basic needs, particularly stable housing. As emergency eviction moratoriums are lifted, it is crucial that the state continues to assist those facing eviction by supplying funding for legal counsel. All Marylanders deserve adequate representation for matters as critical as the safety and security of their housing.

Senate Bill 279 ensures that all individuals who are facing eviction have access to funding for legal counsel. This bill does so by adding money obtained by the prosecution and enforcement of the Maryland Consumer Protection Act to the Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund. The source of this funding is particularly important because it allows for victims of unfair evictions to receive counsel through funding brought on by prosecution of other unethical eviction practices.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 279. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.