



TESTIMONY FOR HB0691
Landlord and Tenant and Wrongful Detainer Actions – Eviction Prevention Services

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Wells

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0691 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

There are many organizations that support tenants in Maryland –

- Social Workers
- Counseling Services
- Financial Assistance Firms that help with Rent or Relocation
- Alternative Dispute Resolution Firms
- Civil Legal Aid Firms

These service providers are loosely referred to as eviction prevention services.

This bill will allow for the courts (and the participants) to make better use of these services.

The bill states that when a tenant is the subject of a court action, they can request a recess while they request the services of an eviction prevention services provider, as long as the provider is in the court building during the time scheduled for the trial. Additionally, either party can request a pause in the proceedings for up to five days to seek attorney representation or to gather witnesses or documents, or if the tenant demonstrates that interest of justice will be better served by referring the parties to an eviction service provider.

The process envisioned in this bill will inject some additional humanity into what is otherwise a process where the outcome can change the lives of those involved.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

