



**Testimony SB 563**

**House Judiciary Committee**

**March 30, 2022**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Clippinger & Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all neighborhoods are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

SB 563 was heavily amended to address the concerns of landlords and received a unanimous favorable vote in JPR. This legislation is a straight-forward fix to a ubiquitous problem. It puts the burden of proof on landlords to show a valid rental license to a judge - in any residential eviction case. Most Maryland counties and cities require landlords to pass a property inspection and obtain a rental license in order to lawfully operate rental properties.

Absent that rule, illegally operating landlords easily use the courts' streamlined eviction procedures, making a profit while evading compliance with local housing laws. This undermines local efforts to eradicate unsafe housing. It is not the responsibility of judges or renters -- it's on landlords to show a valid rental license.

The consequences of eviction are both immediate and long term, and they spread into all aspects of individual, family, and community life. Being evicted can lead to a long spiral of financial instability. It can affect a person's ability to get or keep a job, care for family, stay in good health, build or maintain relationships, and secure future housing. Just having an eviction filing on the public record can be a serious obstacle in securing future housing. People are primarily evicted because of poverty. Evictions disparately impact Black communities, especially Black women and families.

We respectfully request a favorable report for SB 563.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Associate Director, Community Development Network