



## Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee

### HB1050 Access to Counsel in Evictions - Funding

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Taylor

**Committee:** House Appropriations Committee

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, Executive Committee

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1050 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The Maryland Legal Services Corporation quotes a 2020 study of evictions in Baltimore which concluded that most landlords have some form of representation when they go to court, while 99% of tenants do not. A permanent appropriation for the Comptroller Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund will help address this inequity.

We know that evictions:

- Are a detriment to public health, especially during a pandemic
- Have generational impact
- Cost state and local governments a significant amount of money to house, educate, and care for the unhoused
- Have a disparate impact on Black and Brown households and those led by women

We also know access to counsel is transformative. In New York City, 86% of represented tenants remained in their homes and eviction filings decreased by 30% just through the provision of counsel (The Daily Record, January 17, 2023).

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports policies that help tenants fight unfair evictions. We ask that the Committee issue a favorable report on HB1050.