



Councilman Mark Conway
Baltimore City Council *Fourth District*

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TO: Chair William C. Smith, Jr.; Vice Chair Jeff Waldstreicher; members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Mark Conway (District 4, Baltimore City Council; Chair, Public Safety and Government Operations Committee)

RE: SB 504 (Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination Provisions)

POSITION: Support

I am writing today to offer my support for SB 504 (Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination Provisions), which would prohibit a landlord of residential property from failing to renew a lease or from terminating a holdover tenancy without just cause.

As the COVID-19 pandemic wound down and Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds have ebbed, federal, state, and local governments have lifted their eviction moratoriums. As a result, many renters now face challenges that chip away at their housing stability, such as increased rents due to inflation and a lack of affordable housing.

The end of a lease term is a particularly vulnerable time for all tenants, but especially low-income tenants, who face problems that less vulnerable counterparts may not. In many states around the country, landlords are not required to provide a reason for evicting a tenant at the end of a lease or for evicting a tenant without a lease (i.e., a resident with a month-to-month tenancy). A tenant at the end of their lease is also at risk for unreasonable rental price increases that could prevent them from signing or re-signing a lease.

In 2022, the Baltimore City Council passed an ordinance that would have accomplished a similar goal that this bill accomplishes, at the local level. However, I understand that it is the state's duty to pass this legislation, and want to offer my support for this bill as I did when it made its way through Baltimore City Council.

As states begin to run out of emergency rental assistance funds and housing prices continue to rise, local governments must intervene to protect low-income and marginalized households from eviction and, in the worst cases, homelessness. It is our duty now to protect those at risk and pass this common-sense legislation, and I urge a favorable report on SB 504.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Conway, Jr.