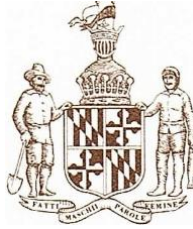


**TERRI L. HILL, M.D.**

Legislative District 12A  
Howard County

Health and Government  
Operations Committee

Subcommittees  
Government Operations and  
Health Facilities  
Public Health and Minority  
Health Disparities



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February 20, 2024

**SUPPORT**

**HB0181- Failure to Pay Rent Proceedings – Shielding of Court Records**

Dear Chair Korman, Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Boyce, Vice Chair Bartlett and Members of the Environment and Transportation and Judiciary Committees,

I am here to ask for your support for HB0181 which requires shielding of certain eviction filing records in instances where a judgment for eviction was never made because, for instance, the debt was resolved before the hearing, or the eviction filing was otherwise settled or dismissed. This would help ensure that the filing of a failure-to-pay action does not carry the same long-term, potentially detrimental effects of an actual finding of a failure-to-pay or eviction itself.

The House passed the bill in 2023 by and slightly different versions in 2022 and 2021, but until this year, with the amended cross-file having passed last week, the bill had not come to a vote in the Senate.

While many failure-to-pay filings for eviction are legitimate, others are not. Currently, even when payments are made, debts settled, or cases dismissed, the fact of there having been an eviction filing remains on the tenant's record. In 2023, there were 156,956 failure-to-pay-rent proceedings dismissed by Maryland courts.<sup>1</sup> Being labeled with the so called "scarlet E" can affect the tenant's future housing options, job opportunities, and financing abilities which tend to be the same for those subject to a final judgement for eviction as to those without. In some cases, filings are used to antagonize tenants for late payments and not for non-payment.

**HB181** would allow the District Court to shield the court records of eviction proceedings that were settled or where cases are dismissed. Tenants can motion to shield the record one year after the proceeding has occurred and the District Court shall shield the record 30 days after granting the tenant's motion to shield.

I ask that the Committee adopt the offered amendment putting the bill in the same posture as the Senate cross-file, SB19, and report favorably on **HB181**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terri Hill'.

Citations & Resources

<sup>1</sup> [District Courts of Maryland - Fiscal Year 2023](#)

[Six Takeaways from America's Rental Housing 2024 | Joint Center for Housing Studies](#)