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**TESTIMONY ON HB0477 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Just Cause Termination Provisions**

**TO:** Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Jeffrey S. Rubin

**My name is Jeffrey Rubin. I am a resident of District 15. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0477, Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Just Cause Termination Provisions.**

The home is a focal point for a web of social interactions that includes friends, neighbors, schools, and other civic institutions. It follows that individuals, their families, and entire communities fall apart as a result of eviction. For years, eviction has been a significant problem in Montgomery County, as well as other jurisdictions across our state, and it remains a serious concern as tenants face ongoing housing shortages and rising rents.

HB0477 is designed to allow local jurisdictions to choose to enact protections for tenants, while respecting the needs and rights of the landlord. It outlines an array of circumstances that justify a landlord's decision not to renew the lease of a renter. These conditions could include various contractual obligations to the landlord and specific provisions that allow the landlord to make other use of the property. However, it does not permit the landlord to displace renters in the absence of a just cause.

This has become an even more pressing issue in jurisdictions like Montgomery County that have adopted a policy of rent stabilization. Some landlords may be tempted not to renew a tenant's lease as a way to circumvent the rent stabilization policies. Unfortunately, there also are instances when landlords choose not to renew a lease to rid themselves of residents who ask for repairs of unhealthy, substandard housing.

In recent years, supermajorities of the Montgomery County Council and the Montgomery County Annapolis Delegation have supported just cause legislation. However, the Maryland General Assembly has ignored this mandate from County representatives. HB0477 overcomes this impasse by enabling local jurisdictions to determine the fate of such legislation.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0477.**