

TESTIMONY
Maryland General Assembly
Environmental and Transportation Committee
In Favor of HB0477—Just Cause, Local Enabling

Elzie Walker 301-588-3987
President of the Arrive Wheaton Tenants Association.
Feb. 13, 2024

Good afternoon, Chairman Korman and Vice Chair Boyce and Committee Members. My name is Elzie Walker and I have been a renter for more than two decades. I have been a renter at Arrive Wheaton for almost six years. I am the president and co-founder of the newly formed Arrive Wheaton Tenants Association. Our community has about 600 apartment homes housing a diverse community.

Recently, my renter community was taken over by a corporation based in California. Soon after the takeover, new management began what we believe is a campaign to target low income and active tenants like me pursuing promised and required services and our rights.

After a series of abusive communications from the new management and a reduction in amenities without any reduction in rent, I and several other residents began to organize a tenants association. Despite numerous attempts by management to obstruct our efforts, we elected officers in January and soon after the officers received notices to vacate without any explanation as to why.

We know the reason. We are being retaliated against for seeking our rights and working collectively to improve the quality of life in our community.

Without just-cause protection, our abusive property management and landlord have unfair advantage over us. We are afraid of losing our homes without justification and this must stop.

I thank Delegates Jheanelle Wilkins and Vaughn Stewart and all of you who support this important legislation.

I and my neighbors urge a favorable report.

Thank you

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