

CROSSOVER BILL HB1117_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL HB#/1117 – FAVORABLE

**Landlord and Tenant - Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects - Tenant Remedies
(Tenant Safety Act of 2024)**

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of CROSSOVER BILL HB#1117, Landlord and Tenant - Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects - Tenant Remedies (Tenant Safety Act of 2024)

This bill promotes the safety, health, and welfare of any tenant. It has four specific benefits that accrue to a tenant.

1. Residential dwelling units must be warranted as fit for human habitation.
2. The existence of mold is declared as a danger and the tenant may obtain relief from that.
3. Courts may order certain relief in a civil action over a breach of warranty of habitability.
4. Said order may include actual damages, abatement of rent, and lease termination.

In the midst of a critical housing shortage we must make the moral and ethical choice to ensure that the housing stock that exists is safe for habitation. Protections against immoral and unethical conduct by landlords must be part of how Maryland manages to fix these problems.

As reported in the Maryland 2022 Healthy Housing Fact Sheet “Hazardous conditions found in unsafe housing can lead to lead poisoning, asthma and other respiratory illnesses, cancer, and unintentional injuries or death, resulting in poor school attendance and performance for children, missed workdays for parents, and the loss of loved ones for all. These hazards and their health impacts disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income communities, making the need for healthy housing a significant environmental and racial justice issue. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed, urgently, our need for safer, healthier, and affordable housing: The increased time spent at home and challenges to healthy housing service delivery have not only affected health negatively but also displayed—in sharp contrast—the longstanding crisis of inequitable access to quality housing and healthcare. In addition, climate change and the associated increase in both incidence and severity of extreme weather events are expanding the scope of policies contributing to healthy housing.”¹

This bill can start to remediate these problems and provide remedies for affected tenants.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass CROSSOVER BILL HB1117.

¹ https://nchh.org/resource-library/fact-sheet_state-healthy-housing_md.pdf