

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

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Good afternoon Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Committee members. I would like to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to speak before you today. I would also like to extend a big thank you to Delegate Wilkins and the other co-sponsors of HB477 for recognizing the vital need around the state of Maryland for jurisdictions to implement just cause protections for vulnerable renters.

Securing safe and affordable housing is already a struggle in this state for many people; however, low income students and new graduates are especially vulnerable to losing their homes without just cause protections. As a recent graduate from the University of Maryland, College Park, I, and many of my peers, have experienced firsthand the difficulties of finding stable housing.

Without just cause protections, finding an affordable home and getting approved is just the beginning of a long and complicated renting process. Currently, without just cause protections, landlords have the unchecked power to determine the fates of their residents by deciding to not renew, with no explanation required. Landlords only need to provide 60 days notice that they will not be offering a renewal. 60 days is not enough time to uproot one's life and start the complicated rental process all over again somewhere new, especially knowing the same thing can happen to them time and time again.

If HB477 were to be passed and allowed jurisdictions to enact just cause protections, a low income college student wouldn't have to burden themselves with the fear of suddenly losing their housing in between semesters. A recent graduate struggling to navigate the post-college world wouldn't have to split their time and efforts between preparing for their future and making sure that they are safely housed in the present.

With just cause protections, renters can feel safe in their homes and know that their ability to call the same place home, can't be ripped away for no good reason. I urge you to enable local jurisdictions with the choice to protect their residents from unbased, unfair, and unjust non-renewals.

I hope that everyone can agree that no one should be evicted from their home without just cause. With that being said, I strongly urge a favorable report. Thank you for your time.