



TESTIMONY FOR HB1117
Landlord and Tenant - Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects - Tenant Remedies (Tenant Safety Act of 2024)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Stewart

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1117 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Currently, the “rent escrow” process is inadequate in ensuring remedies for a landlord’s failure to repair serious and dangerous defects that impact the health and safety of tenants. Tenants living in multi-unit complexes facing similar threats to health and safety should have the ability to join collectively as plaintiffs to hold their landlord accountable. Meaningful sanctions need to be imposed upon those who allow dangerous conditions and defects to exist in leased premises, along with an effective mechanism be established for repairing these conditions and halting their creation.

No one should be forced to live in a dangerous environment while paying for the privilege to do so. This bill provides a remedy for this issue by allowing a group of tenants, or tenant organization, or a single tenant to request injunctive relief or an action for money damages and attorney fees if the landlord refuses to make repairs or correct the problem in a reasonable period of time after being notified.

This legislation does not imply that any and all issues that a tenant has should be covered, only conditions and defects which constitute, or if not promptly corrected will constitute, a fire hazard or a serious and substantial threat to the life, health, or safety of occupants, to include mold. This is more than fair to the landlord and supports the many tenants in Maryland who deserve to live in a building that is not dangerous to their health or their person.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.