Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

HB477

March 2, 2024

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Mayor Brandon M. Scott, City of Baltimore

RE: House Bill 477 – Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination Provisions

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee please be advised that my Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 477.

HB 477 would authorize a jurisdiction to enact a local law that would prohibit a landlord from failing to renew a lease without providing a good cause.

This bill strikes a reasonable balance to ensure that both tenants and landlords have clarity and certainty regarding their lease renewals. It does not mandate that a landlord renew a tenant's lease rather it requires that a reason be given to the tenant if the lease is not going to be renewed. The reasons are broad and include breach of lease, failing to cease disorderly conduct, illegal activity, refusing access for repairs, and the inability to complete renovations while the building is occupied. HB 477 also allows for the landlord, in good faith, to not renew the rental if they wish to remove the property from the market or want to recover possession of the property for their use or the use of their family.

It is important to note that the bill authorizes rather than mandates local jurisdictions to enact a local just cause law. This allows jurisdictions to make decisions in the best interest of their residents and unique local circumstances. In 2021, the Baltimore City Council attempted to pass local legislation to establish "just cause" evictions but the legislation could not be approved by the City's law department for form and legal sufficiency as state law change would be required. HB 477 would make the necessary changes to allow the City to pursue local legislation, should we wish.

For these reasons, I request a **<u>favorable</u>** report on HB 477.