



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 1031

Civil Actions - Lead Poisoning - Liability and Statute of Limitations (Maryland Lead Poisoning Compensation Act)

Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 7, 2024

Dear Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

CASA is **pleased to offer favorable testimony in support of SB 1031**- Civil Actions - Lead Poisoning - Liability and Statute of Limitations (Maryland Lead Poisoning Compensation Act). CASA is a national powerhouse organization building power and improving the quality of life in working-class: Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, and Immigrant communities.

For nearly forty years, CASA has employed grassroots community organizing to bring our communities closer together and fight for justice, while simultaneously providing much-needed services to these communities, helping to ensure that low-income immigrants are able to live rich and full lives. CASA member-led tenant associations are increasing in number and in their power. Our Housing Legal team has also worked closely with members facing uninhabitable living conditions who have brought cases against their unresponsive landlords.

SB 1031 addresses the serious health consequences of lead poisoning and ensures fair compensation for victims of lead poisoning by removing the statute of limitations regarding lead poisoning claims. The overwhelming majority of CASA's more than 155,00 members are renters, and in Maryland, they encounter significant obstacles in their struggle for fair and healthy housing. Lead poisoning has severe health consequences, ranging from developmental delays and learning disabilities to neurological damage and even death, particularly impacting the most vulnerable populations, such as children and pregnant women. The majority of renting families in Maryland are families of color, along with facing rising rents, and threats of evictions many of these families are also facing health and safety concerns due to property managers' neglect. Removing the statute of limitations on lead poisoning claims will allow many families, who might not know how to navigate the court system in time or who might not have received health diagnoses in time to hold negligent property managers accountable.

CASA respectfully urges a **FAVORABLE report on SB 1031**.