

Bill Title: HB1117 Landlord and Tenant - Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects - Tenant Remedies (Tenant Safety Act of 2024)

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Tonia Chestnut, External Affairs Chair, on behalf of Enclave Tenant Association (ETA)

My name is Tonia Chestnut and I am the External Affairs Chair of the Enclave Tenant Association (ETA). I am writing on behalf of the ETA and am submitting this **testimony in support of HB1117 Landlord and Tenant - Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects - Tenant Remedies (Tenant Safety Act of 2024)**. The Enclave Tenant Association represents thousands of renters in the Enclave apartments in Silver Spring, MD. Our association formed due to continuous negligence, compromising tenant safety and living conditions that people who live in the Enclave endure every day because of Hampshire Properties and Rose Valley Management. ETA has sent demand letters, emails, placed phone calls and even rallied against the Enclave management and now we are pushing our support behind "Good Cause."

The residents in our Enclave family deal with worsening conditions in our building every day. Multiple families have been dealing with the unhoused sleeping outside their doors, in laundry rooms, in stairwells, and in the garages. This has been a continuous issue due to the lack of security. We have one unarmed security guard for all three buildings, totaling 1119 units. All the buildings have doors which do not lock, garage doors that are left open, and security cameras that are not being monitored or do not work themselves. This makes the Enclave an easy target for the unhoused to come in out of the cold with their friends, weapons, and animals terrifying the residents who are paying to live here. Many units in the Enclave are also affected by mold due to all the water damage which has occurred, and maintenance has not properly remediated the areas. In many units maintenance will only suction up the water and make sure it is dry; replacing wood areas or drywall is not always included in their process. This has caused many tenants to have illnesses; some to argue with management to shorten their lease so they can move out of the Enclave; and it also claimed the life of a child. A huge safety hazard for the Enclave are the elevators not working properly. Each building has four elevators transporting the Enclave residents to and from their apartments; all four elevators are hardly ever working at the same time. If it rains it is a guarantee that an elevator is going to go down or get stuck. Depending on the amount of rain, the water will even flow into the elevator itself which will leave it inoperable.

There are a litany of other issues that we face building wide including not having proper air conditioning during the summer months and not having proper heating during the winter months. Currently we have a building without an operable fire alarm system, which has been down for about four weeks. Security dispatch does not also pick up the phone when you call for a situation; fire extinguishers are missing throughout the buildings; the management office does

not pick up the phone in the office; and I can keep on going but I am going to choose to stop here.

Our property management has been negligent and has refused to answer our multiple requests for maintenance and upkeep. As a result, our buildings are blighted and do not offer decent living standards. We don't have the money to pay for lawyer fees to fight the management company/owners to make sure residents are living in proper conditions, we need your assistance to pass bills that will help us. HB1117 would allow tenants facing the same issues in the same building to join a single rent escrow case. This would give our association and tenants across the state the ability to hold landlords and property managers accountable for their negligence and improve living conditions for Maryland renters. For this reason, the Enclave Tenant Association urges a favorable report on HB1117.