

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA and Maryland Renters United. I am a resident of District 12. **I am testifying in support of SB992.**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Eviction is an intensely stressful event in the lives of individuals and families. In addition to whatever troubles underlie the eviction itself and the struggle to find new housing, people being expelled from their homes face the uncertainty of not knowing when the ax will fall and the panic of trying to make sure they hold onto their personal property when the eviction occurs. Currently, the law requires no advance notice of the specific date of eviction, and makes no provisions for safeguarding tenant property.

If someone happens to not be home when the sheriff serves the warrant of restitution, the tenants' possessions are put on the street and left subject to theft or damage; the tenant with an impending eviction can only hope they are home at the time, or that they return soon enough to reclaim their property. Everything from necessities like clothes and medication, to family heirlooms and photographs, to important documents like birth certificates and social security cards can be lost in this way. The impact ranges from mildly inconvenient to catastrophic.

SB992 would change the law in two important ways. First, it requires a landlord to give two weeks' notice of the scheduled eviction date, allowing tenants to appropriately prepare. Second, it requires a landlord to safeguard the personal possessions left on the property for 10 days, giving evicted tenants a chance to reclaim them. Neither of these measures stops the landlord from reclaiming their property after a court issues a lawful warrant of restitution. They simply prevent the eviction process itself from being unnecessarily traumatic and punitive. These changes will substantially improve the lives of Marylanders facing a tough situation of having to leave their home.

This issue goes beyond economics to long-standing racial inequities. In October 2023, the National Equity Atlas reported an estimated 98,000 households were behind on their rent in Maryland.¹ Of those, 79% of tenants are people of color, including Blacks, Latinx, and Native Americans. Eviction has been documented to hit Black women tenants hardest because of intersecting prejudices against women with eviction records and housing discrimination against Blacks.² Considering the wage gap for Black women is \$0.60 for every \$1 a white man earns, each item thrown on the street is harder to replace after eviction,³ deepening financial hardship. Marylanders suffering the consequences of historically racist policies ought to be spared further harm.

As a small private landlord, I expect my tenants to treat my property with care and it seems only right I do the same, even if a contract ends in eviction.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB992.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Erica Palmisano
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

¹ <https://nationalequityatlas.org/rent-debt>

² https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w30382/w30382.pdf

³ <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/gender-pay-gap-statistics/>