

**April 2, 2024**

**Testimony on House Bill 1117**

**Landlord and Tenant - Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects - Tenant Remedies (Tenant Safety Act of 2024)  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 2000 nonprofit organizations and institutions across our State. The nonprofit community serves various needs of Maryland families suffering economic and social hardships. Bad housing conditions and housing instability is a major challenge for them, and threatens their families health and safety.

House Bill 1117, as passed by the House of Delegates, establishes a state-wide ‘warranty of habitability’ on residential leases and provides for its enforcement. The legislation:

- establishes that a landlord that offers a dwelling unit for rent is deemed to warrant the dwelling “fit for human habitation”;
- establishes remedies if a landlord breaches the warranty of habitability; and
- establishes additional remedies if a landlord fails to repair serious and dangerous defects, as required under existing statute.

Remedies created by the bill include authorizing multiple tenants to join as plaintiffs in actions based on a breach of the warranty of habitability or the failure of a landlord to repair serious and dangerous defects.

Maryland’s 96,000-unit housing shortage is limiting tenant mobility and contributing to the problem of unsafe living conditions. Aging housing stock across the state – nearly 60% of Maryland’s homes were built prior to 1980 – means tenants often face issues such as inadequate heat and plumbing, and rodent infestation. These conditions can lead to injuries, reduced respiratory capacity, cardiovascular diseases, and infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and influenza. With a housing shortage, renters have less mobility and are less likely to be able to negotiate for better living conditions. Consequently, those with less bargaining power and fewer resources experience increased health risks.

We strongly urge you to give House Bill 1117 a favorable report.