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Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland State Senate
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership: Support for SB 442 – Real Property – Landlord and Tenant – Procedures for Failure to Pay Rent, Breach of Lease, and Tenant Holding Over (Tenant Possessions Recovery Act)

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Honorable Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

On behalf of the Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership (BRHP), I'm writing to express our support for SB 442, a critical measure that ensures tenants receive notice of their impending eviction date and a limited period to reclaim their personal possessions if an eviction is executed.

BRHP is a non-profit organization that expands housing choices for low-income families who have historically been excluded from housing in well-resourced neighborhoods by helping them access and transition successfully to safe, healthy, and economically vibrant communities. As the Regional Administrator for the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program, BRHP currently provides over 4,300 low-income families rental assistance in the form of Housing Choice Vouchers coupled with counseling support for families as they move from areas of concentrated poverty to areas of opportunity in Baltimore City and the five surrounding counties.

SB 442 is a necessary and reasonable bill that brings Maryland in line with the majority of other states by establishing two fundamental tenant protections:

- 1. Advance Notice of Eviction.** Tenants must receive notice at least 14 days before their scheduled eviction date. This notice is crucial, allowing tenants to exercise their statutory right of redemption ("pay to stay") or make necessary arrangements to vacate the property with their belongings intact.
- 2. Post-Eviction Reclamation Period.** If an eviction occurs, tenants must have at least 10 days to reclaim their personal possessions. This provision ensures that evictions do not

result in the permanent loss or destruction of essential items such as medications, legal documents, work tools, school supplies, and irreplaceable sentimental belongings.

The intent of an eviction is to return possession of the property to the landlord, not to strip tenants of their personal belongings. Yet, under current Maryland law, tenants can lose everything they own when their belongings are immediately discarded during an eviction. Families aren't just forced to replace furniture and household necessities – parents must struggle to obtain new birth certificates for their children and other important documentation lost or destroyed, individuals lose lifesaving medications that are expensive or impossible to replace quickly, and irreplaceable keepsakes are permanently gone. No one benefits from the cruel consequences of these losses, which further destabilize families already facing housing insecurity.

All neighboring jurisdictions – Washington D.C., New Jersey, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia – require landlords to provide tenants with notice of their eviction date and an opportunity to reclaim their personal possessions after an eviction. SB 442 is a sensible step toward aligning Maryland with these established best practices.

Eviction is not just a loss of housing—it is a traumatic event that disrupts families' lives, education, and emotional well-being. By ensuring tenants have advance notice and a reclamation period, SB 442 offers a reasonable and dignified approach to eviction procedures. Renters deserve reliable notice of their eviction date and an opportunity to reclaim their possessions. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 442.

Adria Crutchfield
Executive Director