



Senate Bill 46 – Real Property - Wrongful Detainer Actions

Position: Support

Maryland REALTORS® strongly supports SB 46 as amended, which addresses the fraudulent real estate practice of “squatting” through the use of an expedited wrongful detainer action.

Within the past year, REALTORS® have reported increased incidents of squatting in residential properties, typically those that are vacant or listed for sale or rent, but also those where an owner is temporarily away. Scammers that have no legal rights to the property illegally occupy these residences, at the expense of the rightful owners or tenants who must find other accommodations through no fault of their own.

Often, squatters will also produce forged leases or other documents which on initial review might indicate they have a right to occupy the residence. When these documents are presented to law enforcement responding to the squatting situation, it can be difficult to determine who has rightful ownership. As a result, property owners are told that this is a matter for the courts, which under current processes may involve weeks or months before the property is restored to them.

It is imperative that the court makes a quick decision in these cases to return possession of the property to the rightful owner and help them mitigate any financial losses they have incurred. In addition, the more expeditiously these cases are resolved by the court, the sooner the police may act against the person committing fraud.

SB 46 provides this to current and future homeowners and renters who have been victims of squatters, and we urge your favorable report.

**For more information contact lisa.may@mdrealtor.org or
christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org**