

March 25, 2025

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

We are also a part of Renters United Maryland, which respectfully opposes this legislation. Though well intentioned, this bill may have unintended consequences for vulnerable Marylanders, leaving them susceptible to homelessness.

America's current housing crisis has a large impact on people with disabilities, including people with serious mental illness. Individuals with serious mental illness are often desperate for affordable housing, leaving them vulnerable to predatory landlords—and this legislation emboldens those landlords.

We are concerned about the disparate impact this will have on Marylanders who are in need of housing.

For someone with a mental health condition, the basic necessity of a stable home can be hard to come by. The lack of safe and affordable housing is one of the most powerful barriers to recovery. When this basic need isn't met, people cycle in and out of homelessness, jails, shelters and hospitals. Having a safe, appropriate place to live can provide stability to allow individuals to achieve their goals.

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