

# SENATE BILL 339

N1, E1, D3

9lr0342

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By: **Senator Raskin**

Introduced and read first time: January 29, 2009

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Real Property – Abatement of Nuisance – Prostitution**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing that the habitual use of real property for the purpose  
4 of prostitution is a nuisance that may be the subject of a certain action for  
5 abatement; defining a certain term; and generally relating to prostitution and  
6 abatement of nuisance actions.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
8 Article – Criminal Law  
9 Section 11–301(c)  
10 Annotated Code of Maryland  
11 (2002 Volume and 2008 Supplement)

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
13 Article – Real Property  
14 Section 14–120  
15 Annotated Code of Maryland  
16 (2003 Replacement Volume and 2008 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
18 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article – Criminal Law**

20 11–301.

21 (c) “Prostitution” means the performance of a sexual act, sexual contact, or  
22 vaginal intercourse for hire.

23 **Article – Real Property**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 14–120.

2 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

3 (2) “Commercial property” does not include residential rental  
4 property.

5 (3) “Community association” means:

6 (i) A nonprofit association, corporation, or other organization  
7 that is:

8 1. Comprised of residents of a community within which  
9 a nuisance is located;

10 2. Operated exclusively for the promotion of social  
11 welfare and general neighborhood improvement and enhancement; and

12 3. Exempt from taxation under § 501(c)(3) or (4) of the  
13 Internal Revenue Code; or

14 (ii) A nonprofit association, corporation, or other organization  
15 that is:

16 1. Comprised of residents of a contiguous community  
17 that is defined by specific geographic boundaries, within which a nuisance is located;  
18 and

19 2. Operated for the promotion of the welfare,  
20 improvement and enhancement of that community.

21 (4) “Controlled dangerous substance” means a substance listed in  
22 Schedule I or Schedule II under § 5–402 or § 5–403 of the Criminal Law Article.

23 (5) “Nuisance” means a property that is used:

24 (i) **1.** By persons who assemble for the specific purpose of  
25 illegally administering a controlled dangerous substance;

26 [(ii)] **2.** For the illegal manufacture, or distribution of:

27 [1.] **A.** A controlled dangerous substance; or

28 [2.] **B.** Controlled paraphernalia, as defined in § 5–101  
29 of the Criminal Law Article; or

1                    [(iii)] **3.** For the illegal storage or concealment of a controlled  
2 dangerous substance in sufficient quantity to reasonably indicate under all the  
3 circumstances an intent to manufacture, distribute, or dispense:

4                    [1.] **A.** A controlled dangerous substance; or

5                    [2.] **B.** Controlled paraphernalia, as defined in § 5–101  
6 of the Criminal Law Article; **OR**

7                    **(II) HABITUALLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROSTITUTION.**

8                    (6) (i) “Operator” means a person that exercises control over  
9 property.

10                    (ii) “Operator” includes a property manager or any other person  
11 that is authorized to evict a tenant.

12                    (7) “Owner” includes an owner–occupant.

13                    (8) “Owner–occupant” includes an owner of commercial property that  
14 conducts business in any part of the property.

15                    (9) “Property” includes a mobile home.

16                    (10) **“PROSTITUTION” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 11–301 OF**  
17 **THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE.**

18                    **(11)** (i) “Tenant” means the lessee or a person occupying property,  
19 whether or not a party to a lease.

20                    (ii) “Tenant” includes a lessee or a person occupying a mobile  
21 home, whether or not a party to a lease.

22                    (iii) “Tenant” does not include:

23                    1. The owner of the property; or

24                    2. A mobile home owner who leases or rents a site for  
25 residential use and resides in a mobile home park.

26                    (b) An action under § 4–401 of the Courts Article to abate a nuisance may be  
27 brought by:

28                    (1) The State’s Attorney of the county in which the nuisance is located;

29                    (2) The county attorney or solicitor of the county in which the nuisance  
30 is located;

1 (3) A community association within whose boundaries the nuisance is  
2 located; or

3 (4) A municipal corporation within whose boundaries the nuisance is  
4 located.

5 (c) An action under § 4–401 of the Courts Article to abate a nuisance may be  
6 brought against:

7 (1) A tenant of the property where the nuisance is located;

8 (2) An owner of the property where the nuisance is located; or

9 (3) An operator of the property where the nuisance is located.

10 (d) (1) An action may not be brought under this section concerning a  
11 commercial property until 45 days after the tenant, if any, and owner of record receive  
12 notice from a person entitled to bring an action under this section that a nuisance  
13 exists.

14 (2) The notice shall specify:

15 (i) The date and time of day the nuisance was first discovered;  
16 and

17 (ii) The location on the property where the nuisance is allegedly  
18 occurring.

19 (3) The notice shall be:

20 (i) Hand delivered to the tenant, if any, and the owner of  
21 record; or

22 (ii) Sent by certified mail to the tenant, if any, and the owner of  
23 record.

24 (e) (1) In addition to any service of process required by the Maryland  
25 Rules, the plaintiff shall cause to be posted in a conspicuous place on the property no  
26 later than 48 hours before the hearing the notice required under paragraph (2) of this  
27 subsection.

28 (2) The notice shall indicate:

29 (i) The nature of the proceedings;

30 (ii) The time and place of the hearing; and

1 (iii) The name and telephone number of the person to contact for  
2 additional information.

3 (f) A plaintiff is entitled to relief under this section whether or not an  
4 adequate remedy exists at law.

5 (g) (1) If, after a hearing, the court determines that a nuisance exists, the  
6 court may order any appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief.

7 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and in addition to or  
8 as a component of any remedy ordered under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the  
9 court may order:

10 (i) A tenant who knew or should have known of the existence of  
11 the nuisance to vacate the property within 72 hours; or

12 (ii) An owner or operator of the property to submit for court  
13 approval a plan of correction to ensure, to the extent reasonably possible, that the  
14 property will not again be used for a nuisance if:

15 1. The owner or operator is a party to the action; and

16 2. The owner or operator knew or should have known of  
17 the existence of the nuisance.

18 (h) (1) (i) If a tenant fails to comply with an order under subsection (g)  
19 of this section and the owner or operator, and tenant, are parties to the action, the  
20 court, after a hearing, may order restitution of the possession of the property to the  
21 owner or operator.

22 (ii) If the court orders restitution of the possession of the  
23 property under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph, the court shall immediately issue  
24 its warrant to the sheriff or constable commanding execution of the warrant within 5  
25 days after issuance of the warrant.

26 (2) If an owner, including an owner-occupant, fails to comply with an  
27 order under subsection (g) of this section, after a hearing the court may, in addition to  
28 issuing a contempt order or an order for any other relief, order that:

29 (i) The property be sold, at the owner's expense, in accordance  
30 with the Maryland Rules governing judicial sales; or

31 (ii) The property be demolished if the property is unfit for  
32 habitation and the estimated cost of rehabilitation significantly exceeds the estimated  
33 market value of the property after rehabilitation.

34 (3) If an owner-occupant fails to comply with an order under  
35 subsection (g) of this section regarding a nuisance in the owner-occupied unit of the

1 property, after a hearing the court may, in addition to issuing a contempt order or an  
2 order for any other relief, order that:

3 (i) The owner-occupied unit be vacated within 72 hours; and

4 (ii) The owner-occupied unit remain unoccupied for a period not  
5 to exceed 1 year or until the property is sold in an arm's length transaction.

6 (i) Except as provided in paragraph (g)(2) of this section, the court may order  
7 appropriate relief under subsection (g) of this section without proof that a defendant  
8 knew of the existence of the nuisance.

9 (j) In any action brought under this section:

10 (1) Evidence of the general reputation of the property is admissible to  
11 corroborate testimony based on personal knowledge or observation, or evidence seized  
12 during the execution of a search and seizure warrant, but shall not, in and of itself, be  
13 sufficient to establish the existence of a nuisance under this section; and

14 (2) Evidence that the nuisance had been discontinued at the time of  
15 the filing of the complaint or at the time of the hearing does not bar the imposition of  
16 appropriate relief by the court under subsection (g) of this section.

17 (k) The court may award court costs and reasonable attorney's fees to a  
18 community association that is the prevailing plaintiff in an action brought under this  
19 section.

20 (l) An action under this section shall be heard within 14 days after service of  
21 process on the parties.

22 (m) This section does not abrogate any equitable or legal right or remedy  
23 under existing law to abate a nuisance.

24 (n) (1) An appeal from a judgment or order under this section shall be  
25 filed within 10 days after the date of the order or judgment.

26 (2) If either party files a request for oral argument, the court shall  
27 hear the oral argument within 7 days after the request is filed.

28 (3) (i) If the appellant files a request for oral argument, the  
29 request shall be filed at the time of the filing of the appeal.

30 (ii) If the appellee files a request for oral argument, the request  
31 shall be filed within 2 days of receiving notice of the appeal.

32 (o) Provisions of the Real Property Article or public local laws applicable to  
33 actions between a landlord and tenant are not applicable to actions brought against a  
34 landlord or a tenant under this section.

1           (p)    All proceedings under this section are equitable in nature.

2           (q)    (1)    Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, when  
3 necessary to accomplish the purposes of this section, a law enforcement officer, an  
4 attorney in a municipal or county attorney's office, or an attorney in an office of the  
5 State's Attorney may disclose the contents of an executed search warrant and papers  
6 filed in connection with the search warrant to:

7                   (i)    An officer or director of the community association in which  
8 the nuisance is located, or the attorney representing the community association;

9                   (ii)   An owner, tenant, or operator of the searched property or an  
10 agent of the owner, tenant, or operator of the searched property; or

11                   (iii)   An attorney in a municipal or county attorney's office.

12                   (2)    An affidavit may not be disclosed under this subsection while  
13 under seal in accordance with § 1-203 of the Criminal Procedure Article.

14           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
15 October 1, 2009.