

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 932

(Delegate Stewart, *et al.*)

Environment and Transportation

Judicial Proceedings

Landlord and Tenant – Right to Redemption of Leased Premises – Form of
Payment

This emergency bill establishes that in a failure to pay rent action where a landlord or mobile home park owner is awarded a judgment providing for the repossession of the subject premises and a tenant or resident has the right to redemption, an electronic or written check issued by a political subdivision or on behalf of a governmental entity has the same legal effect as a payment by the tenant.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: In general, a landlord seeking to evict a tenant must file the appropriate action (*e.g.*, failure to pay rent, breach of lease, *etc.*) in the District Court. If awarded a judgment by the court, the landlord files a warrant of restitution, which, once reviewed and signed by the court, authorizes an eviction. The warrants of restitution are forwarded to the local sheriff's office who is then authorized to carry out the evictions. Statute sets forth numerous specific requirements for such actions, including those related to written notice prior to filing certain actions. This includes specific requirements for written notice prior to initiating a failure to pay rent action.

In failure to pay rent actions, if judgment is in favor of the landlord and the tenant does not return the premises to the landlord or otherwise satisfy the judgment by paying the applicable rent and late fees within 4 days, as specified, the court must, at any time after 4 days have elapsed, issue a warrant of restitution. The court may, upon presentation of a certificate signed by a physician certifying that surrendering the property within the 4-day period would endanger the health or life of the tenant or other occupant, extend the time for surrender of the premises as justice may require up to 15 days. Statutory provisions also authorize stays of execution in other specified circumstances, such as in the event of extreme weather conditions.

If the landlord does not order a warrant of restitution within 60 days from either the date of judgment or the expiration date of any stay of execution (whichever is later), then (1) the judgment for possession must be stricken and (2) the judgment must generally count toward the threshold for the number of judgments at which a tenant no longer has the right to redemption of the leased premises, as specified.

A tenant has the right to redemption of the leased premises by tendering in cash, certified check, or money order to the landlord or the landlord's agent all past due amounts, as determined by the court, plus all court awarded costs and fees, at any time before actual execution of the eviction order. This right of redemption does not apply to any tenant against whom three judgments of possession have been entered for rent due and unpaid in the 12 months prior to the initiation of the action, as specified.

A resident in a mobile home park has a similar right to redemption, as specified in statute.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: SB 592 (Senator Lee, *et al.*) - Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Montgomery and Prince George's counties; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Housing and Community Development; Department of Human Services; Department of Legislative Services

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