



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 744 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Tenant Rights and Protections (Tenant Protection Act)

SPONSOR: Delegates Stewart, *et al.*

HEARING DATE: February 18, 2020

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 744 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Tenant Rights and Protections (Tenant Protection Act)**, which requires establishes requirements and procedures for landlords that use a ratio utility billing system and reduces the time a landlord must return a security deposit from 45 days to 30. The bill also allows a tenant who has notified a landlord of serious defects and provided the landlord reasonable time to make repairs to terminate the lease if the landlord fails to make the necessary repairs and allows a tenant to terminate their future liability under a lease if they or a legal occupant is a victim of stalking. In addition, the bill sets standards for tenant organizations to meet in an apartment facility.

Maryland can do a better job at protecting its tenants. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that there are 724,335 renters in Maryland, a third of all households, with 117,181 in Prince George's County.¹ Despite the number of renters in our state, a 2018 study ranked Maryland as only the 32nd friendliest to renters.² This can be traced to provisions in state law that are among the most stringent for tenants; while current state law requires a landlord to return a security deposit within 45 days, 40 states have laws requiring a shorter turnaround.³ The

¹ "Out of Reach 2019: Maryland," *National Low Income Housing Coalition*, <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/maryland>

² Balint, Nadia. "Which States Have the Best and Worst Laws for Renters?" *RentCafe*, March 14, 2018, Accessed on Feb. 17, 2020, at <https://www.rentcafe.com/blog/renting/states-best-worst-laws-renters/>

³ Stewart, Marcia. "Chart: Deadline for Returning Security Deposits, State-by-State," *Nolo*, Dec. 15, 2019, Accessed on Feb. 17, 2020, at <https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/chart-deadline-returning-security-deposits-29018.html>

Tenant Protection Act would make Maryland significantly more hospitable to renters by granting them additional legal protections and rights.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 744** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.