



**Bill Title:** House Bill 50, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Tenant Rights and Protections (Tenant Protection Act of 2021)

**Committee:** Environment & Transportation

**Date:** January 26, 2021

**Position:** Favorable with Amendments

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities. Our members house over 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

House Bill 50 provides additional residential housing provider restrictions in four categories: Ratio Utility Billing System (RUBS), security deposit, tenant organization and victims of stalking.

**RUBS:** If a landlord uses a RUBS system, the residential housing provider must provide to all prospective tenants in writing a number of statements and data related to the allocated utility services. **MMHA offers the attached amendments to address concerns from the industry.**

**Security Deposit:** House Bill 50 requires that when a security deposit is withheld, a landlord must provide a statement of costs where practicable, including supporting documentation, bills, invoices and receipts that identify materials or services provided (page 6, lines 12-15). Given the amount of time to obtain invoices, we are concerned about exceeding the 45 day security deposit return date.

**Tenant Organization:** Under House Bill 50, a tenant organization has the right of free assembly in a meeting room within an apartment facility. A landlord may impose reasonable terms and conditions on the use of the meeting room. A landlord may require an individual participating in a tenant organization meeting who is not a resident of the apartment facility to sign a waiver of liability for injuries sustained on the property. The bill spells out the requirements of a tenant organization which is designate at least two but not more than five members who are authorized to schedule use of a meeting room and provide written notification to the landlord at least once per year. A landlord cannot charge a tenant organization a fee for use of the meeting room for the first meeting of the tenant organization within the same month, as long as the fee not exceed the regular schedule of fees charged to other groups.



**Victims of Stalking:** A tenant may terminate the future liability under the lease if the tenant or legal occupant is a victim of stalking. The tenant would only be responsible for rent for the time following the tenant providing notice of intent to vacate, up to a maximum of 30 days. The notice must include a copy of a report by a qualified third party with certain redactions. Once a landlord receives notice, the landlord must inspect the leased premises. If the tenant vacates, landlord must provide the tenant a written statement that confirms the tenant has vacated, states the rent that the tenant is responsible for and the amount still owed. If the tenant vacates earlier than 30 days after the date the tenant provided notice of intent to vacate or who fails to provide written notice, the tenant is responsible for the maximum rent required under this section.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report with amendments on House Bill 50.

**Aaron J. Greenfield, MMHA Director of Government Affairs, 410.446.1992**

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 50  
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 4, line 1, define “THE ELEMENTS”

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 4, lines 12-13, strike “METER READING DATES, BILLING DATES”

AMENDMENT NO. 3

On page 4, line 16, after “REQUEST” insert, “BY THE TENANT IF MADE WITHIN SEVEN (7) DAYS FROM THE DATE THE LANDLORD PROVIDES THE TENANT A BILL”

AMENDMENT NO. 4

On page 4, in line 28, after “UTILITIES” insert “IF MADE WITHIN SEVEN (7) DAYS FROM THE DATE THE LANDLORD PROVIDES THE TENANT A BILL”