



**TESTIMONY FOR HB0050
LANDLORD AND TENANT – RESIDENTIAL LEASES – TENANT RIGHTS AND
PROTECTIONS (TENANT PROTECTION ACT OF 2021)**

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Stewart

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0050 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Being a landlord is difficult. Perhaps that is why our laws are so much more geared towards the rights of landlords than the rights of tenants. However, transparency and flexibility are not hall marks of the tenant experience. But, as difficult as being a landlord is, there should be some better give and take with tenants.

For example, if a tenant is charged for utilities as a percentage of the total utility bill for the rental building or collective, they should know in advance how the charges are calculated and what to expect for a normal monthly expense. This is basic transparency. It benefits the landlord by allowing the tenant to plan their expenses.

Along with transparency, flexibility is also an important consideration. In cases where the tenant is the victim of domestic violence or stalking and needs to terminate their rental contract for their own safety, being able to walk away from a horrible situation is crucial. No, it doesn't help the landlord financially, but it ensures that the victim is not having two things to worry about – the abuser or stalker, and a financial issue.

These are the kinds of things that we need to take into account in order to make our laws more equitable. Our members believe that the rights of tenants are as important as the rights of landlords and we need to ensure that they are protected.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.