



# Howard County Council

George Howard Building  
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Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

Christiana Rigby  
Councilmember

District 3

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0785

### Landlord and Tenant – Commencement of Action to Repossess for Failure to Pay Rent – Required Notice and Grace Period

February 12, 2021

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Committee. I am writing today to express my **support for HB0785**, legislation introduced by Delegate Terrasa to expand protections for residents facing eviction in Maryland.

Far too often, Marylanders receive an eviction letter from court with little or no advanced notice from their landlord. This legislation would make a simple yet significant change to the eviction process by requiring landlords to provide 10 days of notice to tenants for unpaid rent prior to going to court. This provision will give tenants additional time to address unpaid rent, seek housing assistance, or find alternative housing options.

Over the last several months, I have worked with countless Howard County residents facing housing instability or eviction. In many of these cases, residents facing eviction just need more time to make their rental payments or receive housing assistance. By requiring additional time in this process, HB0785 will help resolve failure-to-pay evictions before involving the judicial system, providing Marylanders with additional support that is needed in a very difficult situation.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to harm the physical, social, and economic health of Marylanders, the need for fair and stable housing policies has only grown. Housing instability was a crisis before this pandemic began, and it has been exacerbated significantly over the past year. As we look to the future, our state should pursue policies and structural changes to address and eliminate housing instability wherever and whenever possible. HB0785 is one important tool in this effort.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I respectfully encourage a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christiana Mercer Rigby".

Christiana Rigby  
Howard County Councilmember, District 3