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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB910/HB1312**  
**COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Savannah Parrish

My name is Savannah Parrish and I live in Baltimore County in District 42. I am writing in support of SB910/HB1312, the COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021. This bill would protect vulnerable Marylanders from eviction during the COVID pandemic.

I learned about the many challenges facing Maryland's renters while attending the University of Baltimore, where I interned in Baltimore City's Court working with tenants dealing with rent escrow matters. I helped them review funding waivers and tried to find them legal counsel. Most of the people I helped were living in terrible physical conditions and with significant housing insecurity. Their stories were heartbreaking and tragic.

I met one couple with two children and a baby on the way. They showed me pictures of their ceiling caving in, pipes that had burst and many other hazardous conditions. Their landlord did nothing to address their unsafe living conditions and declined to provide them with any answers. Refusing to pay rent was the only thing they could do to get their problems fixed. Another woman I tried to help had to work three jobs just to pay the rent on her substandard apartment. I routinely met people who were being taken to court by their landlords over a few hundred dollars in exchange for an awful place to live.

While it is hard to imagine things getting worse for many of the people I worked with, the COVID-19 pandemic has made renters in Maryland even more vulnerable. That is why SB910 is so important. This bill helps provide relief to landlords while also protecting families with so few options during the pandemic. It gives people peace of mind during this chaotic time that going to court will not be the first option and evictions will be last resort.

For this reason, I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB910/HB1312.