



## **Senate Bill 210: COVID-19 Claim – Civil Immunity**

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings Committee

**Date:** January 26, 2021

**Position:** **Favorable**

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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.

Senate Bill 210 establishes immunity for businesses against civil liability claims stemming from exposure to COVID-19. To qualify for immunity, businesses must comply with all federal, state, and local statutes, rules, regulations, executive orders, and agency orders related to COVID-19. Further the bill covers only claims that arise between March 5, 2020 and 180 days after the expiration or recession of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

SB 210 is a critical bill that will ensure an effective economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses have confronted unprecedented complications throughout the pandemic while complying with all federal, state, and local mandates, and SB 210 would enact reasonable measures to ensure that compliant businesses are not further confronted with unnecessary lawsuits.

A significant number of states have enacted legislation to provide some form of civil immunity against COVID-19 claims for businesses. Similar to other states, SB 210 establishes a reasonable timeframe for immunity and requires businesses to comply with all federal, state, and local mandates in order to qualify for immunity. Moreover, SB 210 establishes a reasonable provision in which businesses that are grossly negligent or responsible for intentional wrongdoing will forfeit their immunity from civil claims.

SB 210 will promote economic recovery through reasonable and necessary protection against civil claims stemming from COVID-19. For these reasons, MMHA supports SB 210 and respectfully requests a favorable report from the committee.

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