

March 10, 2021

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS 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: Stacy Brody

My name is Stacy Brody. I live in Bethesda in District 16. This testimony is in support of SB910/HB1312, the COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021. As a Jewish person, I hold sacred the value of *dei machsoro* - we must provide for all people resources sufficient for their needs.

We must provide all people with stable and secure housing.

Let us start with an image.

You have finished your workout and are in desperate need of a shower before making your morning coffee. You go into the bathroom and turn the faucet left, to H. You wait a minute, undress, allowing the water to warm. You tentatively place your hand in the stream, expecting the water to be lukewarm, on the way to hot. You've come to relish almost burning showers, no matter what you've heard about the detrimental impacts on skin health.

The water is cold.

The water is ice cold.

It is winter, but you've never had a winter - a day, maybe, once, when an ice storm took your power out - without hot water, without heat.

You've never been truly cold.

Frustrated, you step into the shower anyway, rinse off for seconds, and are chilled to the bone.

You step out, towel off, put on clothes. The water will be hot in an hour. You trust that, if it's not, your landlord will respond within the same day to a service request.

The hot water is back by the time you've finished your coffee.

You'll never know what it means to be left in the cold.

No one should have to know true cold.

The pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated existing issues in our housing system. As a white, middle-class woman, I have not had the experience of homelessness. I do know that, as a Jewish person, I am called to work in partnership with God to create a world in which all have what they need - to be safe, to be healthy, and to live with dignity. Renters must be protected from rising rents and fees, unfair evictions, and being left in the cold. This bill also provides financial relief for landlords, empowering them to provide rent forgiveness. Especially during this emergency, we must ensure that all have *dei machsoro* - sufficient resources.

I write to ensure all people can stay in their homes, that all can be warm. **I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB910/HB1312.**