



Matt Losak
1001 Spring Street
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
In favor of HB 112, Sealing of Records
Judiciary Committee
Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Good afternoon Chairman Clippinger and Vice-Chairman Atterbary and committee members. My name is Matt Losak and I am a co-founder and Executive Director of the Montgomery County Renters Alliance—an alliance of more than 30 labor, community, religious, political and civic action organizations and thousands of renters. We are Maryland’s first and only regional nonprofit dedicated exclusively to renter outreach, education, organizing and advocacy.

For too long eviction filings have been treated in public records with common disregard for their impact on renters’ ability to find housing.

The Renters Alliance understands the landlords’ business need to ensure that a prospective tenant is financially suitable for residency, and we encourage responsible landlords to ensure that prospective tenants are not likely to unreasonably disrupt or put in danger renter communities.

That said, what we see is the piling on of common court filings that in effect creates a black list for renters who, over the life of their tenancy may have been late with their rent on occasion, or retaliated against by incompetent or vindictive property staff or landlords who target renters seeking promised or required services, or simply pursuing their rights, questioning billing or demanding proper maintenance.

This bill asks that all too common filings be shielded from public view and ultimately from public records until such time as serious allegations be substantiated and adjudicated.

I cannot imagine what credit reports would look like for most people if late payments or disagreements with cable companies, hospitals, car insurance companies were publicly announced, copied and placed in permanent records for a simple late payments or service complaints without being serious, with reasonable and proper due process and adjudication.

Housing is far too important for derogatory records to be so easily created.

We urge a favorable report.

Thank you.

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