



**Testimony HB 729  
Judiciary Committee  
February 12, 2021  
Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Clippinger & Members of Judiciary Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

HB 729 would increase the eviction filing fee from \$18 to not less than \$120, the surcharge that the District Court is required to assess per civil case for summary ejectment, tenant holding over, and breach of lease that seeks a judgment for possession of residential property against a residential tenant; requiring the District Court to assess the surcharge against a landlord and prohibiting the court from awarding or assigning the surcharge against a residential tenant; etc.

Maryland has more than 500,000 eviction filings each year and is in need of reform. Eviction isn't just a byproduct of poverty, but a driver of it. According to "Evicted" author Matthew Desmond's research, a year or more after eviction, families are more likely to experience hardships like hunger or going without electricity. Evicted workers are more likely to get laid off. Children are more likely to miss school. Eviction has had a disproportionate impact on black women who struggle to regain footing for themselves and their children.

A new study published in Sociological Science in December 2020 used data from millions of court records of eviction cases filed between 2012 and 2016, the study found that Black renters received a disproportionate share of eviction filings and experienced the highest rates of eviction filing and eviction judgments.

COVID-19 pandemic has put hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Maryland households in desperate conditions. This is the time for reform of the eviction system to protect people who have been hardest hit by COVID-19.

We respectfully request a favorable report for HB 729.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network of Maryland