



**TESTIMONY FOR HB18  
LANDLORD AND TENANT- EVICTION ACTION- RIGHT TO COUNSEL**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate W. Fisher

**Committee:** Judiciary

**Organization Submitting:** Our Revolution Howard County

**Persons Submitting:** David LeGrande, Vice-chair and Paul Baicich, Chair

**POSITION:** Favorable

We are presenting this testimony on behalf of Our Revolution Howard County (ORHoCo), the county chapter of an organization inspired by the political and social messages of Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT). We fight for values and policies covering climate-change, health care, and economic and racial justice that focus on the needs of our neighbors, co-workers, and working families, particularly in this time of COVID.

We strongly support passage of HB18 for the following reasons:

1. Over 650,000 eviction cases are filed each year in Maryland with only 805,000 renter households;
2. Evictions exacerbate the public health crisis posed by COVID-19;
3. Evictions have a disparate impact upon black and brown households in the State; and
4. Providing a right to counsel to tenants in eviction cases is a proven means of preventing the disruptive displacement of families and the resulting social, economic, and public health costs of such displacement.

Given the above facts, the General Assembly and Senate of Maryland must provide tenants with the ability to invoke and enforce the right to legal representation in any eviction proceeding and the State must provide such representation to tenants to assist in the fair administration of justice. The policy of Maryland must be altered to provide tenants facing an eviction from their home the right to legal representation in eviction proceedings and the State must provide such representation to assist in the fair administration of justice.

We recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

Thank you.

- David LeGrande, ORHoCo Vice-chair
- Paul Baicich, ORHoCo Chair

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