

Bill Number: HB0674 Thomas Knoche FAV

Date of Hearing: 2/22/2022

Thomas Knoche, Board Member, Broadview Apartments, LLC
116 West University Parkway, Baltimore, MD 21210

TESTIMONY ON HB0674 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Landlord and Tenant - Stay of Eviction Proceeding for Rental Assistance Determination

TO: Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Thomas Knoche

My name is Thomas Knoche. I am part of the Broadview Apartments, LLC family ownership group. Broadview Apartments is in the 43rd District. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0674, Stay of Eviction Proceeding for Rental Assistance Determination.

The Broadview Apartments, LLC owns 500 units of rental housing at the NE corner of University Parkway and W. 39th Street in Baltimore City, where approximately 1300 people are housed.

I encourage the Maryland legislature to adopt HB0674 to protect tenants from eviction while rental assistance is pending determination. We support this legislation for three reasons.

(1) We see first-hand the impact the pandemic has had on the people, mostly students, who rent from us. Times are tougher than many ever expected to see, and the financial hardship comes at no fault of their own. The financial impact of the pandemic, based on current economic projections, will likely persist for several years.

(2) Our costs go down when turnover is reduced, so we want residents to live at our developments for as long as they can. Displacement is bad for them, and the turnover costs are bad for us. Rental assistance may be all that many tenants need to get past a temporary financial crisis, and avoid loss of their current residence.

(3) Displacement can lead to homelessness, and the latter is to be avoided at all cost. The human cost is beyond measure. The cost to society – specifically taxpayers -- can be measured. Study after study, over decades, confirm that the most cost-effective way to address homelessness is to avoid it by preventing displacement (for example, with rental assistance), providing sufficient affordable housing units, and preventive social services.

Decent housing ought to be a basic human right. Renters should not be evicted while their application for rental assistance is pending. I believe this legislation will benefit both tenants, and landlords, in MD. I urge this Committee to return a favorable report on HB0674, and the House to pass it.