



Testimony SB 384
House Environmental and Transportation Committee
March 29, 2022
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation 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.

SB 384 , like the cross-file HB 674, provides that the court should pause rent-based evictions when a rental assistance application is pending. The State has \$400 million in rental assistance available, but Maryland still has nearly 700 evictions/month across the state. The Senate adopted substantial amendments in response to the landlord and property owner groups concerns.

The consequences of evictions are deep and long lasting. Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of their social determinants of health, including access to health care, education, employment, economic stability, housing, and public safety, which are deeply impacted by systemic racism. No one should be evicted in the unprecedented aftermath of a global pandemic when there is money to pay the rent. SB 384 as amended by the Senate is a reasonable compromise that gives rental assistance agencies the opportunity to be effective.

Rent court cases are delayed in some jurisdictions but not nearly as much as landlords claim. Delays vary but pausing the eviction for rental assistance makes the landlord whole and keeps families housed. A pause at court allows the rental assistance agency time to prioritize the case for payment. Court times vary depending on the type of case and county from no delay (Worcester, Wicomico, Somerset, Dorchester, Anne Arundel, Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot) to 4-6 months (Baltimore City, Prince George's, Montgomery)

Currently, evictions are taking place when there is a rental assistance application pending. In a 2021 survey of Maryland attorneys who practice in landlord-tenant, 73% reported that in some, most or all of their cases, renters faced eviction while waiting for rental assistance. 63% of attorneys reported that their clients faced eviction when landlords refused to cooperate with rental assistance.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director