



TESTIMONY
Maryland General Assembly
Environmental and Transportation Committee
In Favor of HB881—Just Cause, Local Enabling
William Roberts, 301-588-3987
Chair, Montgomery County Renters Alliance, Inc.
Board of Directors
Feb. 22, 2022

Good afternoon, Chairman Barve and Vice Chair Stein, Committee Members. The Montgomery County Renters Alliance is 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.

The Renters Alliance is in favor **of HB 881 that will simply authorize local jurisdictions to enact just-cause protections for their renting residents in whatever form they choose, if any.** We are especially grateful to our friend and colleague Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins and the 14 other sponsors from around the state, as well as the elected officials, renters and advocates from around the state who represent the broad support for this measure.

The Renters Alliance has supported just-cause legislation for more than a decade urging Maryland to catch up to other states, including New York, New Jersey, California, and the District of Columbia with long standing renter populations. As Maryland's renter population grows from 23% in 2007 to nearly 40% today, it's time for the Maryland General Assembly to grant this fundamental protection that says no one should be evicted from their home without a good reason.

We oppose any concept that contract law is made in vacuum without federal, state and local laws governing what provisions a contract can contain. We hope the legislature will finally embrace the understanding that stable, quality, affordable housing is a right, and that the absence of stable housing has substantial financial, social and humanitarian costs for all of us.

All HB 881 asks for is your authorization to allow local jurisdictions to choose to enact the protection, or not, and in whatever form they choose. This committee and the Maryland General Assembly should grant local jurisdictions the power to implement these protections for their own renting residents.

We strongly urge a favorable report.

Thank you

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