



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senate Bill 347: Anne Arundel County - Landlord and Tenant - Procedures for Failure to Pay Rent
Position: Favorable

February 9, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Honorable Chair William C. Smith, Jr. and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights and financial inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

We are writing today in support of Senate Bill 347.

Evictions are swift, catastrophic events for tenants. Once a judgment for possession is entered, if tenants do not leave within 4 days then a warrant of restitution can be issued within a 60 day period following the conclusion of the initial hearing. The result is an unclear timeline for renters who must rapidly find alternative living arrangements and remove their personal belongings from the property.

Evictions are disproportionately imposed on Black female led households. In 2021, we received 462 eviction-related intake forms from Black women. This represents 57% of our clients affected by evictions. They have significant short and long-term consequences on physical and psychological health.¹² They lead displaced people to move to substandard housing in areas with higher crime rates and lower rates of economic activity.³ Economic waste results when people don't have enough time to remove their personal belongings and must abandon them. These consequences of eviction are made more severe when people lack clear expectations of when they will occur.

Senate Bill 347 addresses this lack of clarity in Anne Arundel County by requiring landlords, their duly qualified agents, or their attorneys to provide written notice both by certified mail and posted on the unit's front door at least 14 days before the intended day of repossession as set by the sheriff.

¹ https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/MEMO_Health_Effects_of_Eviction_on_Young_Adults.pdf

² <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/681091>

³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26286885/>



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While this is still a brief time for families to rearrange their lives, it does provide them with clearer expectations. By requiring advance notice with a date of intended repossession, households who are already in a terrible situation will have more opportunity to prepare and respond. This could mean less people forced to live in hotels or their cars and less people abandoning personal property in their haste to leave. A 14-day notice of intended repossession can help households facing eviction prevent an already traumatic experience from compounding into a more severe, longer-term loss.

For all these reasons, we support Senate Bill 347 and urge a favorable report.

Best,
Michael C. Donnelly
Tenant Advocacy Coordinator