



Official Testimony  
SB223

Landlord and Tenant - Eviction Actions - Filing Surcharge and Prohibited Lease Provisions  
Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Smith and Members of the Judiciary Proceedings Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation – representing 10,000 healthcare workers in long-term care facilities and hospitals across Maryland. Our union supports SB223: Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses and urges the Committee to issue a favorable report.

Since the inception of COVID, families all over Maryland have faced both housing and financial hardships with little to no avail. The difficulties have ranged from backlogs of mortgage payments to evictions, even leaving some families in complete ruin. One of the reasons this occurred is that landlords have taken vast action to file eviction actions against financially burdened residents. Financial ruin has not only damaged many families because of the devastating impact COVID had on the general workforce population, including the closing of businesses and worksite COVID contractions, but this has consequently affected children. As more families face evictions, it has put children in homelessness, missed schools, malnourishment, and other socio-economic conditions that stunt the proper growing process of our youth.

To combat this legislation, SB223 puts a financial deterrent against landlords that many usually exercise arbitrary (and without considering the consequences) evictions. This bill increases the filing fees in eviction actions to make it more consistent with the fees charged for filing for eviction in other states. Allowing the fee to increase to an amount not to exceed \$73.00 will force landlords to think more critically about how many families they decide to evict. In current circumstances, many landlords arbitrarily pick any number of families to evict without any recourse. Moreover, this bill would also prohibit courts and landlords from passing these increased surcharges on to residential tenants. This is important because many landlords often pass charges arbitrarily to tenants, which only continue to burden families already struggling to

survive.

The members of 1199SEIU stand behind this piece of legislation because it creates a deterrent against landlords for at-risk families. For many families, a home is the last source of security, and allowing landlords to prey on struggling families is something we stand adamantly against. When families are still facing evictions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and face other socio-economic challenges to maintain their livelihoods, we encourage this Committee to give SB223 a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones  
Political Director  
1199SEIU UHE  
ricarra.jones@1199.org