



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: Senate Bill 384: Landlord and Tenant- Stay of Eviction Proceeding for Rental Assistance Determination

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Members of the Committee,

I want to commend Senator Hettleman for her leadership on this critical and timely legislation.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Howard County we have successfully provided funding to help almost 2,200 families avoid eviction and stay in their homes since receiving the first CARES Act grant for rental assistance in July 2020.

As of January 31st, we have also provided \$18M in rental assistance payments to keep 2,195 renter households safely housed, however there are still hundreds more residents in need of assistance. We currently use a network of community partners and an online application portal to get assistance to landlords as quickly as possible to prevent residents from receiving failure to pay rent notices and facing eviction. Sadly, the effects of the pandemic still linger in our community. There is more to be done as we work to make sure residents have the resources they need to prevent eviction and avoid homelessness.

For the last 18 months, we have collaborated with our regional partners in the Baltimore Metropolitan area to develop best practices and share information to create effective rental assistance programs and services. Howard County chose to administer our rental assistance funds through our nonprofit partner agencies that already have a presence in the community instead of processing the applications in-house. This allowed us to successfully streamline the application and approval process to get critical funding to landlords and prevent them from filing failure to pay rent notices in the courts which would facilitate the eviction process.

It is critical to provide resources to residents still struggling from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and keep them in their homes. This bill will help keep our homelessness systems from being overwhelmed and help our residents maintain their housing. I appreciate your consideration and urge a favorable report on SB 384.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive