



## Senate Bill 629

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Date:** February 22, 2022

**Position:** Favorable with Amendments

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities. Our members house over 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry including towing companies.

Senate Bill 629 (“SB 629”) requires the Judiciary to collect, compile, and report data on evictions every 2 weeks. SB 629 also requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to publish the data in a dashboard on the Department’s website and update the dashboard monthly.

MMHA supports the collection and reporting of more data on evictions. MMHA commends the Maryland Judiciary for their current reporting process, which provides data on court filings, warrants of restitution, and evictions at the local and state level in monthly reports. Due to our support for additional data, MMHA is compelled to request that the committee consider an amendment to Sb 629 that would require legal service providers to compile and report annually on important data concerning evictions. Specifically, MMHA recommends the following amendment to SB 629:

On page 2, line 5, insert, “(4) ‘LEGAL SERVICE ENTITY’ MEANS ANY ENTITY, INCLUDING A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION, THAT RECEIVES STATE OR FEDERAL FUNDS FOR EVICTION PREVENTION OR EVICTION RELATED LEGAL SERVICES FROM THE ACCESS TO COUNSEL IN EVICTIONS SPECIAL FUND OR FROM THE MARYLAND LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION.

On page 2, line 27, insert, “(D) A LEGAL SERVICE ENTITY SHALL PROVIDE QUARTERLY REPORTS TO THE DEPARTMENT THAT: (1) DELINEATE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ATTORNEYS EMPLOYED BY THE LEGAL SERVICE ENTITY THAT PROVIDED REPRESENTATION IN HOUSING CASES DURING THE RELEVANT QUARTER; (2) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSING CASES IN WHICH ATTORNEYS FOR THE LEGAL SERVICE ENTITIY PROVIDED FULL REPRESENTATION TO A TENANT DURING THE RELEVANT QUARTER; (3) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF EVICTION CASES THAT RECEIVED FULL REPRESENTATION DELINEATED BY TYPE DURING THE RELEVANT QUARTER; (4) THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS RECEIVED AND EXPENDED DURING THE RELEVANT QUARTER; (5) DATA ON CASE DISPOSITIONS THAT WERE DECIDED DURING THE RELEVANT QUARTER; (6) HOW MANY INDIVIDUALS, IF ANY, RECEIVED REPRESENTATION FOR MULTIPLE CASES DURING THE RELEVANT QUARTER; AND (7) THE JURISDICTIONS IN WHICH FULL REPRESENTATION WAS PROVIDED DURING THE RELEVANT QUARTER.”

On page 2, line 27, insert, “(E) ON A QUARTERLY BASIS, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL COMPILE REPORTS FROM LEGAL SERVICE ENTITIES AND MAINTAIN THE REPORTS AS PUBLIC RECORDS SUBJECT TO THE MARYLAND PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT.

The theme of SB 629 is that the state is best informed by consistent data reporting from entities that receive state or federal funding. As such, it is critical for the state to receive data and information from legal service providers



that receive state or federal funds in Maryland. **For this reason, MMHA respectfully requests adoption of the aforementioned amendment.**

**Grason Wiggins, MMHA Senior Manager of Government Affairs, 912.687.5745**