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Budget and Taxation Committee
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker
Senate Bill - 662 - Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund - Funding
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 22nd, 2022
1:00pm
Position: SUPPORT

Good afternoon Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Waldstreicher, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill - 662 - Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund - Funding.**

Senate Bill 662 requires the Comptroller to distribute \$11.8 million from the State's Unclaimed Property Fund to the Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund only for fiscal year 2023. This would help over 9,000 families avoid evictions. After this legislation was drafted, Governor Hogan allocated \$5.4 million toward this program, still leaving this program \$6.4 million short from what the law required. For this reason, there is an amendment that I am offering to adjust the FY 23 allocation to \$6.4 million.

The majority of Maryland residents that are facing evictions are people of color and have children in their households. By implementing Access to Counsel, the State could help level the scales and save an estimated \$62 million from reduced emergency room, shelter, and foster care costs.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 662, as amended. Thank you for your kind consideration.