



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 384

Landlord and Tenant – Stay of Eviction Proceeding for Rental Assistance Determination

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 15, 2022

Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

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Behavioral Health System Baltimore

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Maryland Hunger Solutions

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Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

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Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) supports SB 384, which would authorize the court to pause an eviction proceeding for a rental assistance determination and prevent landlords from using the court to collect rent if they are refusing rental assistance. Maryland has unprecedented funding to prevent evictions and resulting homelessness. Yet, in the second half of 2021, **705 households were evicted per month. Many of these families likely became homeless as a result of eviction.**

Each year in Maryland, more than 30,000 people experience homelessness. Leading researchers with the Aspen Institute and others have [documented the ways in which eviction cause homelessness and other forms of immense human suffering](#):

- [Following eviction](#), a person's likelihood of experiencing homelessness increases, mental and physical health are diminished, and the probability of obtaining employment declines.
- Eviction is linked to [numerous poor health outcomes](#), including depression, suicide, and anxiety, among others.
- Eviction is also [linked with respiratory disease](#), which could increase the risk of complications if COVID-19 is contracted, as well as mortality risk during COVID-19.
- Eviction makes it more expensive and more difficult for tenants who have been evicted to [rent safe and decent housing](#), apply for credit, borrow money, or purchase a home.
- Instability, like eviction, is [particularly damaging to children](#), who suffer in ways that impact their educational development and well-being for years.

This does not include the [enormous public costs of eviction and homelessness](#) from Medicaid-insured homeless persons forced to use the emergency room as their primary care physician or the increased number of children forced to enter foster care due to eviction. SB 384 helps prevent eviction and homelessness by:

1. Giving the court authority to pause an eviction process to allow rental assistance to work;
2. Incentivizing Landlords to Accept Rental Assistance or they will not be able to use the judicial process to collect rent.
3. Aligning The Pace of Rental Assistance With Eviction Processes For Fairness and Efficiency; and
4. Adopting a national best practice to pause evictions during this ongoing pandemic.

No one should be evicted when there is money to pay the rent – especially during a pandemic. As such, MAP asks the Committee to issue a favorable report without amendments on SB 384.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.