



**SB 0629 – Landlord and Tenant – Eviction Data
Hearing before Senate Judicial Proceeding Committee
February 22, 2022
Position: Support**

Good afternoon, Chairman Smith and members of the Committee. My name is Duane Yoder and I serve as president of the Garrett County Community Action Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of SB 629. I also want to thank Senator Edwards for sponsoring this bill. It is needed to better understand and respond to problems that arise when families and individuals are evicted from their homes. It is needed to target social safety network programs and it is needed to plan on how better to deploy financial and legal resources arising from evictions.

Garrett County Community Action wears several hats when addressing evictions. Community Action owns and manages over 700 rental units, possibly the largest landlord in Garrett County. Community Action also administers an array of emergency housing and rental assistance services directed to stabilizing families and avoiding homelessness, assisting a total of 888 renters in 2021. 80 homeless persons were sheltered in motels or in Community Action's 9 bed shelter. 163 households who were evicted were assisted in moving to permanent housing before they became homeless. 243 households received assistance that prevented an eviction. As of today, Garrett County Community Action is sheltering 35 persons.

I cite these numbers because knowing where and how many evictions are occurring is important data from an affordable housing landlord perspective as well as a provider of services and financial assistance. In the last two years Community Action did not evict a single tenant for nonpayment of rent. Federal and State financial assistance played an important role in this. Most of those tenants who are receiving assistance are again employed but as their eligibility for rent assistance ends, they will be confronted with having to pay full rent and in a significant change from the pre to post pandemic era, we are experiencing an increase of rents as much as 20%. The 243 households now receiving financial assistance and 163 who were evicted and are now living in permanent homes may face eviction.

I believe the data derived from SB 629 can play a useful part in our planning and responding to the housing need in Garrett County and perhaps even more so at the State level. In the post pandemic period it will be more crucial to GCCAC and to the State as funding ends and we need to think strategically about how to deploy limited resources and assess affordable permanent housing for families and individuals

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