



## Senate Bill 384

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Date:** February 15, 2022

**Position:** Unfavorable

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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.

Senate Bill 384 (“SB 384”) creates additional delays in an already historically delayed court system and requires housing providers to accept agreements from agencies that distribute rental assistance. If housing providers do not accept the rental assistance agreements, including **any** prohibitions and requirements that may be included within an agreement in the future, housing providers forfeit all rights to unpaid rent.

To be clear, courts have not heard non-payment of rent cases since late December 2021, and courts will not begin to hear non-payment of rent cases until March 7, 2022, at the earliest. Due to court closures and court scheduling processes, jurisdictions across the state are experiencing significant delays between a court filing and a court hearing. **The time between a court filing and a court hearing for non-payment of rent cases is more than one year in some jurisdictions.** Maryland’s housing providers simply cannot afford additional delays to an already excessively slow process.

SB 384 requires housing providers to accept rental assistance grant agreements, including **any** prohibitions or requirements that may be included in an agreement in the future. SB 384 establishes **NO** limitation on what an agency may include in a grant agreement for rental assistance. As such, SB 384 would force housing providers to accept any requirements that agencies may choose to include in their grant agreements or lose their right to collect unpaid rent. Further, SB 384 is not limited to federal rental assistance and would therefore **indefinitely** subject housing providers to any number of future prohibitions or requirements. **For these reasons, MMHA respectfully requests an unfavorable report from the committee.**

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