

March 2, 2022

The Honorable Luke H. Clippinger
House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 101
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Opposition HB 521 Landlord and Tenant - Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent - Shielding of Court Records

Dear Chairman Smith:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **Opposition HB 521 Landlord and Tenant - Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent - Shielding of Court Records**. MBIA **Opposes** the Act in its current version.

This bill would allow petitioners to ask to shield court records for repossession or failure to pay rent. MBIA respectfully opposes this measure. While the measure does restrict itself to COVID-related loss of income, there is not investigative process in place to discover if a petitioner truly lost their income due to the Pandemic unless the claim is directly disputed by a landlord, and there is no provision even for that much in the case of failure to pay rent. There should be some confirmation process in place to prevent bad actors from taking advantage of this bill. Additionally, the pandemic has indicated structural issues in the US job market that landlords should be able to account for when assessing the risks of renting a property. This bill passes the risk burden of those structural issues onto landlords that have already accepted considerable risk in making an investment in a rental property.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the House Judiciary Committee