



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee
HB 824: Landlord and Tenant - Eviction Data - Collection and Distribution
Position: Favorable

February 16, 2022

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 101
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
cc: Members, House Judiciary Committee

Honorable Chair Clippinger and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights and financial inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

We are writing today in support of HB 824.

This bill requires the Judiciary to collect data for possession of residential property and share eviction data with the Department of Housing and Community Development every 2 weeks. The bill further requires the Department to make eviction data available in a certain format to a state agency or an academic institution located in the state.

Maryland does not have a standard place where statewide eviction data is collected and analyzed. Currently, the Maryland Judiciary only publishes county level eviction filings and outcomes a month after they happen. Data are critical for analysis to target community and state interventions as well as for an efficient civil legal system.

Because there is no state mandate or framework for stewarding eviction data, jurisdictions vary in types of data they collect and make available. As a result, it is difficult to make cross-jurisdictional comparisons or to compare data from the county level to the state level. Further, Maryland is not included in any state comparative analysis, including Eviction Lab which was the first national database created to help neighbors and policymakers understand the eviction.

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition provides a number of direct services throughout the state geared towards generating economic equity and housing stability. MCRC's Tenant Advocacy Program



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empowers tenants to advocate for themselves by providing information about housing rights and responsibilities, legal information, mediation, and referrals to other nonprofits and legal services. Our SOAR (Securing Older Adult Resources) Program works to improve the financial well-being of older adults through research, community outreach programs, and direct service benefits including financial coaching and counseling. Many of our tenant and SOAR clients are faced with barriers to housing stability and often come to us when they are faced with eviction. Access to data would better inform our eviction prevention and family stability efforts.

For these reasons, MCRC supports HB 824 and asks for a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Isadora Stern
Policy Associate