

## **Testimony on HB521**

Landlord and Tenant—Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent. Shielding Court Records

Position: **Favorable**

To Chair Clippinger and the House Judiciary Committee

My name is Susan Allen and I live in Annapolis, MD. I am testifying on behalf of the Maryland Poor Peoples Campaign whose volunteers advocate for poor, low-wealth, and working families.

For several years, our organization—in coalition with other social justice groups--has worked for legislation and financial benefits to keep people housed during the Covid-19 epidemic.

In spite of generous rental assistance, evictions have continued in Maryland throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Moreover, eviction filings, especially by corporate landlords, are still filed within one hour of a delayed payment for rent.

The result: Many Maryland whose jobs and families have been impacted by Covid-19 now have eviction records—even if they have not been evicted.

Why do these eviction records have to be shielded? Because future landlords, credit companies, and other valuable service providers use for-profit services to track evictions and then refuse to work with these families.

Eviction filings—even when unsuccessful--leave a black mark that average families cannot erase.

Imagine, if one time, your daughter or son missed a credit card payment, Equifax filed a court injunction, and then kept a black mark forever against her in the credit rating service.

Our current MD Court eviction records process is wrong.

Please pass this time-specific bill to shield eviction records during Covid-19.

Respectfully, Susan Allen  
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