



House Bill 712

Committee: Judiciary
Date: February 16, 2022
Position: Favorable with Amendments

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. MMHA also represents over 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

House Bill 712 (“HB 712”) directs federal rental assistance funding to the Access to Counsel in Evictions Program (“A2C Program”). MMHA’s position on funding for the Access to Counsel in Evictions Program (“A2C Program”) has been consistent. MMHA is supportive of funds that do not burden housing providers who provide critical services to Maryland’s residents, and MMHA is supportive of those funds being allocated to the program based on a sound budget development process. While MMHA has significant questions regarding the budget proposed by certain organizations for the A2C Program, **HB 712 is certainly a more appropriate method to fund the A2C Program than unrecoverable court costs being levied against housing providers that are exercising their right to access the impartial judicial system.**

Amendment

Section 2 of HB 712 states that “excess” federal rental assistance money received by Maryland in fiscal year 2022 shall be appropriated to the Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund (see page 3, line 12). MMHA has had conversations with stakeholders regarding HB 712, and MMHA has been provided with significantly different estimates of the amount of federal funds that HB 712 allocates to the Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund. Since HB 712 is one of at least three separate bills that would direct funding to the program, MMHA respectfully requests that the committee amend Section 2 of the bill to be more specific about how much funding is being directed to the program under HB 712.