

**Bill Number:** HB0724/SB0662 Thomas Knoche FAV

**Date of Hearing:** 2/16/2022

Thomas Knoche, Board Member, Broadview Apartments, LLC  
116 West University Parkway, Baltimore, MD 21210

**TESTIMONY ON HB0724/SB0662 - POSITION: FAVORABLE  
Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund - Funding**

**TO:** Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Thomas Knoche

**My name is Thomas Knoche. I am part of the Broadview Apartments, LLC family ownership group. Broadview Apartments is in the 43rd District. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0724/SB0662, Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund.**

The Broadview Apartments, LLC owns 500 units of rental housing at the NE corner of University Parkway and W. 39<sup>th</sup> Street in Baltimore City, where approximately 1300 people are housed.

I encourage the Maryland legislature to adopt HB0724/SB0662 to fund and expand access to counsel for low income tenants facing eviction. I support this legislation for four reasons.

(1) At the Broadview, we see first-hand the impact the pandemic has had on the people, mostly students, who rent from us. Times are tougher than many ever expected to see, and the financial hardship comes at no fault of their own. The financial impact of the pandemic, based on current economic projections, will likely persist for several years.

(2) Our costs go down when turnover is reduced, so we want residents to live at our developments for as long as they can. Displacement is bad for them, and the turnover costs are bad for us.

(3) Displacement can lead to homelessness, and the latter is to be avoided at all cost. The human cost is beyond measure. The cost to society – specifically taxpayers -- can be measured. Study after study, over decades, confirm that the most cost-effective way to address homelessness is to avoid it by preventing displacement, providing sufficient affordable housing units, and preventive social services.

(4) Finally, anyone facing eviction should be able to get legal assistance if they want it. It is a basic right that all aggrieved parties in our society, including tenants, should share. With counsel, tenants are more likely to get access to support services and avoid eviction.

We consider decent housing to be a basic human right. Improving funding for access to counsel and eviction diversion provisions will increase fairness and stability in the housing market long after the pandemic has waned.

I believe this legislation will benefit tenants, and most responsible landlords, in the State of MD. I urge this Committee to return a favorable report on HB0724/SB0662.