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Testimony in Support of SB 0756 – FAVORABLE
Access to Counsel in Evictions – Funding
Before the Appropriations Committee – April 4, 2023

My name is Daniel L. Rosenberg, and I am the Clinical Instructor for the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law’s Eviction Prevention Clinic. I expect others will testify to the profound need for continued funding Access to Counsel in Evictions from a tenant advocacy perspective. I would like to use my testimony as an opportunity to speak as a recipient of Access to Counsel in Evictions funding through MLSC and express why I believe that there are benefits to continuing the funding through 2027 beyond the benefits to tenants.

The University of Maryland’s Eviction Prevention Clinic exists because of Access to Counsel in Evictions funding from the Maryland Legal Services Corporation. I began working with the Clinic in December of 2022 after working nearly seven years at Maryland Legal Aid. Although we faced some quick deadlines in getting the Clinic up and running in a short period of time, we have a full enrollment of 8 student attorneys who are actively representing tenants facing eviction. Already, my students have prevented three evictions, and are actively preparing many more cases for trial. I am confident that but for the involvement of legal representation, those tenants would have been evicted from their residences.

The Clinic provides benefits beyond the representation of low-income Baltimore City tenants. It also provides a unique learning opportunity for law students. Through the Clinic, students develop professional skills in a supervised, practice-based setting. They learn how to interact with and manage clients in a client-centered way. They learn how to conduct practical legal research and develop legal theories. Finally, the students represent clients in court. For students, this experience is invaluable. Litigation-based clinics allow students to translate what they learn in their doctrinal courses into practical knowledge. The direct representation of clients also helps students develop self-confidence so that they have real-world experience before they enter the professional ranks.

The Clinic also exposes students to the real-world need for Access to Counsel in Evictions and fosters interest in legal services careers and pro bono participation. As others will no doubt testify, hiring and retaining staff is a constant challenge in legal services. By providing a positive and meaningful clinical experience, the Eviction Prevention Clinic shows students what a career in legal services looks like and shows that it is a realistic and fulfilling career option. Programs like the Eviction Prevention Clinic are essential in allowing law schools to help create future

¹ This testimony in support of this Bill represents the personal opinions of the faculty members of the respective clinics and is based on their knowledge and experience. This support may not represent the position of the University of Maryland Carey School of Law; the University of Maryland, Baltimore; or the University of Maryland System.

generations of informed and passionate legal services attorneys. Moreover, for those students who pursue careers in other legal fields, the Clinic will engender a respect for the need for pro bono partnerships, and hopefully inspire those students to volunteer and help foster cultures of volunteerism in their practices.

The Clinic I teach exists because of Access to Counsel in Evictions funding. Without that funding, the Clinic would cease to exist, and students would no longer receive the benefits of clinical education in this essential field. It is, in my estimation, essential that the law schools in the state take an active role in cultivating future generations of legal services attorneys, and in inspiring a deeply-held commitment to pro bono participation. In order for the work we do to continue, there must be continued funding. Thus, I support Senate Bill 0756, and encourage this committee to pass the Bill.