

Harold Hill | Burtonsville, Maryland 20866

Hello, my name is Harold Hill. As a community dad and a renter in Burtonsville, Maryland, I believe in the power of community to create safe, supportive and fun neighborhoods for everyone. However, the fear of eviction or legal action from my landlord is a constant reminder that my freedom to organize with neighbors and improve our community is not guaranteed.

Recently, I suggested starting a family committee to my neighbors in my apartment complex. It was my way of building relationships and making our community better. However, the property manager quickly shut down the idea, insisting that I needed to speak with their lawyers first. It's been months since then, and I've been taking it slow, getting to know the management, and building trust. But the fact that I have to run the risk of legal action to simply talk with my neighbors is not right.

Regularly, I do outreach in my community for food distribution and connecting people to social services. I talk to neighbors coming out of their car and at their doors. Sometimes, I have been prohibited from doing so in my own apartment complex though the connections I have made through this work have been critical for my neighbors and sometimes life-saving.

Just cause evictions would provide renters like me with the security we need to freely express ourselves and work together to create safer, more resourceful communities. It is time we had the freedom to form committees, groups, and associations without fear of retaliation from our landlords. No one should have to feel like their basic right to organize and improve their community is at risk.

I urge the authorities to support just cause evictions in Maryland so that renters like me can have the peace of mind to build a better community without fear of retaliation from our landlords.

Thank you.