

Dear Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of Maryland District 40, and live in the Medfield neighborhood of Baltimore. **I am testifying in support of House Bill HB0684.**



HB0684 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month/week-to-week leases. This legislation would enable local legislatures to pass their own laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur, requiring landlords to have a just cause to non-renew, or requiring landlords to prove a just cause in court.

In contrast to Maryland's present "no cause" policy is "just cause" policy where a landlord may choose not to renew an expiring lease *only if there is an acceptable basis for that decision*. Given the budget limitations of many states and municipalities to fund other solutions to the eviction crisis, passage of just cause eviction ordinances appears to be a relatively low-cost, effective policy solution. Without this bill, jurisdictions like Montgomery County and Baltimore City face preemption challenges to trying just cause eviction policies. This bill gives local legislatures the power to decide what's acceptable and when. It recognizes that local legislatures know how best to help their renters stay stably housed and able to contribute to the workforce and the economy.

A disproportionate number of people who are evicted are Black and Brown, and [social scientists have documented](#) declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes as negative outcomes among children who experienced eviction. Housing is a foundational need -- setting the stage for success, or alternately, struggle. Helping people remain in their homes ensures we stop perpetuating racial inequities, especially lifelong detriments suffered by children.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of HB0684**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Christina Nemphos
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore