

Maryland Renters Deserve Adequate Notices of Evictions and Reclamations

Position Statement Supporting House Bill 1023

Given before the House Environment and Transportation Committee

HB 1023 is a critical measure to protect tenant property rights post eviction and bring the state in line with other jurisdictions. Renters deserve timely notice of the eviction date so that they can exercise their statutory right of redemption or to leave the property without loss of personal belongings. Additionally, renters deserve a reclamation period, where they can still gain access to their belongings after eviction occurs. **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy support HB 1023 because this bill would mitigate the financial and personal loss that evictions causes while giving tenants adequate notice to retrieve their belongings.**

- Right now, Maryland renters have less rights over their personal belongings post eviction than in any surrounding state. Moreover, 42 states and the District of Columbia have laws related to post eviction belongings, with five states limiting renters' personal property rights such as Maryland.
- In most of Maryland, a tenant's personal belongings, from lifesaving medication to birth certificates, are thrown out into the street after an eviction and create clutter and trash that block sidewalks and rights-of-way, creating public safety risks and public blight. HB 1023 provides that after a seven-day, post-eviction reclamation period, the tenant's belongings are considered abandoned and may be disposed of by the landlord in any manner except placing those belonging in the street or public right of way.

HB 1023 would save landlords expenses incurred by removing belongings while giving tenants adequate notice and protection from losing their belongings. For these reasons, **the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests the Environmental and Transportation Committee to make a favorable report on House Bill 1023.**

Equity Impact Analysis: House Bill 1023

Bill Summary

HB 1023 requires landlords to provide certain notice to tenants when a court issues a warrant of restitution for a failure of a tenants to pay, a breach of lease, or a tenant holding over under certain circumstances. It also establishes certain procedures and requirements for the execution of a warrant for repossession.

Background

Maryland lags other states when it comes to renters' property protection. Locally, Washington D.C., New Jersey, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia all have reclamation periods to allow tenants to access to their property. Out of forty-two states, and the District of Columbia, that have laws related to post-eviction belongings, only five states limit renters' personal property rights as much as Maryland. Of those forty-two states, nineteen states and D.C. require notice of the scheduled eviction date, provide for the tenant's right to reclaim belongings, and give the landlord some duty to store the tenant's property. An additional nine states require notice of the scheduled eviction and a right to reclaim. Even without the notice requirement, thirty-three states have reclamation periods that are longer than 24 hours.

Equity Implications

As Black homeownership rates have fallenⁱ, many more are becoming renters amid a growing housing crisis.ⁱⁱ HB 1023 would protect vulnerable tenants facing eviction from losing their property by giving them fair opportunities to claim their belongings.

Impact

House Bill 1023 will likely **improve racial, gender, and economic equity** in Maryland.

ⁱ <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2022/10/15/black-families-fall-further-behind-on-homeownership/>

ⁱⁱ [http://www.mdrealtor.org/Portals/0/adam/Content/nPKfToivVEO6by9O8wLw8g/Link/Amstrat%20Maryland%20State%20of%20Housing%202023%20Report\[81\].pdf](http://www.mdrealtor.org/Portals/0/adam/Content/nPKfToivVEO6by9O8wLw8g/Link/Amstrat%20Maryland%20State%20of%20Housing%202023%20Report[81].pdf)