

January 26, 2022

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**TESTIMONY ON HB0034 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Failure to Pay Rent Proceedings - Prohibition on Rent Increases and Sealing of Court Records**

**TO:** Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Anna T Levy

**My name is Anna T Levy. I am a resident of Rockville, in District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0034, Failure to Pay Rent Proceedings - Prohibition on Rent Increases and Sealing of Court Records.**

Access to safe and stable housing has far reaching economic, health, and social benefits to individuals, families, and communities, and is a key to reducing racial inequities. Renters routinely have little agency when faced with threats to maintaining stable housing. One overdue rent payment can result in an eviction filing. As a Jewish person, I am taught that all people should have *dei machsoro*, resources sufficient for each person's needs. (Deut. 15:7-8) Consequently, society has an obligation to make sure that people can find affordable housing and are not penalized for failure to pay rent proceedings which were dismissed, otherwise resolved without eviction, or for inaccurate reporting.

Evictions are socially and financially destabilizing to individuals, families, and our communities. As a community member, I care that ALL of my neighbors can live in a location that best meets their needs. A history of eviction filings, even when resolved without eviction, impacts a renter's ability to find new housing and even new employment. Landlords are often unwilling to rent to people with a history of evictions or will raise a tenant's rent so that it becomes unaffordable. The search for housing is then limited to what can be found, not necessarily what is best for an individual or family as they strive for financial stability.

The passage of HB0034 can help to resolve housing inequities, increase access to stable and safe housing and help Marylanders achieve financial stability after difficult times. By sealing court records of eviction filings for failure to pay rent that do not result in eviction, tenants are given the opportunity to move forward with their lives.

**I respectfully urge a strong and favorable report from the Committee on HB0034.**