



Odette Ramos

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Testimony

HB684: Landlord Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenants – Local Just Cause Termination Provisions

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FAVORABLE

Honorable Chair Barve and Distinguished Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing to urge your support for **HB684 Landlord Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenants – Local Just Cause Termination Provisions**.

HB684 will provide jurisdictions with the authority to enact local “Just Cause” eviction ordinances. These laws protect renters from arbitrary and retaliatory lease terminations that destabilize the lives of working people, their children, and their communities.

The Baltimore City Council passed a law in 2021 to prohibit landlords from evicting someone after the end of a lease for 180 days after the end of the State of Emergency, and that only specific causes for eviction were allowed before then. Our law department warned us then that we could be sued because it was not in the Baltimore City Council’s power to make laws regarding landlord/tenant matters. We received additional information that during a state of emergency we may not be sued. However, Baltimore City was the subject of litigation as a result of our actions, and the law was rendered moot before the bill expired on Dec 31, 2021.

Therefore, HB684 is vital. The Baltimore City Council wanted to take significant action to help our renters, and HB684 would give us the authority to do that in holdover cases.

I urge your favorable report for this legislation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. I can be reached on 410-396-4814 or via email at odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov.

Respectfully Submitted:

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