



**TESTIMONY TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**HB 0151: Real Property – Residential Leases – Notification of Rent Increases**

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Nancy Soreng, President**

**DATE: February 7, 2023**

The League of Women Voters of Maryland supports sufficient housing, and especially affordable housing, to respond to the increasing need of Maryland residents. LWVMD also supports an increase in clarity surrounding the relationship landlords have with their tenants. Furthermore, LWVMD supports all actions to reduce poverty and promote self-sufficiency.

HB 151 would move tenant rights' forward in allowing them a more knowledgeable arrangement with their landlord if an increase of more than 4% in their rent were to happen.

Maryland is currently facing a housing crisis that affects not only the severely low-income, but the moderate income residents as well. According to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development by the year 2030 Maryland will have over 97,000 low-income households and a severe shortage of housing.

HB 151 would address the very real concern that many of these families live with every day. That landlords could, and do, decide to increase rent and without having to provide proper notification. This results in many families being left with having to put what little money they do have towards a now unexpected cost. While 120 days may not seem like much, it would provide some time for families to adjust.

In the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau we know that 25% of families are behind on rent. Maryland's Emergency Rental Assistance program will run out of money in May of 2023. Without proper notifications many families would continue or begin to fall into this cycle of never being able to 'get ahead.' By enacting HB 151 landlords would become more responsible with their care of duty towards their tenants. The time allotted in this bill would allow families to gather their resources.

LWVMD urges the committee to return a favorable report on HB 151.