

Dear Members of the 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 District 12. I and my partner are also the landlords of a single property in Howard County. **I am testifying in support of House Bill HB0684.**



HB 0684 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 whom 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. People of color form less than half of this state's population, and helping them remain in their homes ensures we stop perpetuating racial inequities, especially lifelong detriments suffered by children.

As a Mom & Pop landlord, I am not worried about how just cause eviction statutes might impact me. There are already so many ways that landlords can evict tenants like nonpayment of rent, property destruction, or breaking lease terms. Were such a statute proposed in my jurisdiction, I would be able to manage my property as I have always done. What would improve in that case is the social fabric of the community in which my tenants live and from which my property derives much of its value. Good tenants would be better empowered to remain in their communities if we prioritize their staying over a heedless pursuit of profit above all. I am not alone in wanting the community that surrounds my property to grow healthier and more robust through stable tenancy.

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,
Erica Palmisano
5580 Vantage Point Rd, Apt 5, Columbia, MD 21044
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore