



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

WILL JAWANDO
COUNCILMEMBER
AT-LARGE
CHAIR, EDUCATION & CULTURE COMMITTEE
PLANNING, HOUSING, AND PARKS COMMITTEE

February 22, 2023

Montgomery County Councilmember Will Jawando
Testimony for Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Just Cause
Termination Provisions
HB0684
February 22, 2023

Chair Barve and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Residents — whether they own or rent — should have stable housing. Too often, renters are not able to maintain stable housing and face the possibility of losing the place they call home without warning or due process.

As an At-Large member of the Montgomery County Council, I have heard from numerous residents and advocates who urgently ask for the county to establish just cause eviction. I share their sense of urgency and offer my testimony in support of HB 684, Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Just Cause Termination Provisions.

Stable housing is one of the most essential assets of human life. A lack of stable housing has been shown to drastically worsen mental health. Evictions, temporary housing situations, and poor housing conditions have been shown to lead to or reinforce issues with depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems.

Studies have shown that moving three or more times in a year, often called “multiple moves,” has been associated with negative health outcomes in children. Children who move frequently are more likely to have chronic conditions and poor physical health. A key element to improving mental health for those in precarious housing and those experiencing homelessness is the provision of affordable, safe, stable, and permanent housing.

I’ve testified before this body sharing the housing disparities that are disproportionately impacting Black and Brown residents. Black and Latinx households in Montgomery County are particularly housing insecure and as we continue to recover from the pandemic it will be these communities that need our attention and support.

Tenant holdover cases in Montgomery County increased dramatically during the pandemic. This started before the Courts put the recent hold on Failure to Pay Rent cases but it is accelerating. A concern that was voiced was about tenant holdovers for tenants with good records of paying rent - not just cases where a tenant might have a record of late rent and so tenant holdover is a way for the landlord to remove the tenant (which are also increasing). My office has received reports from Legal Aid stating they are seeing a trend in landlords increasing their requirements for income compared to rent; in some cases, they are seeing requests for incomes of four times the rent. There are issues of income discrimination as they have seen landlords require this from people with Housing Choice Vouchers. The reality is that many households just don’t earn four times the rent.

HB 684 is about housing equity. Having a stable home should not be an issue that any residents are faced with during these challenging times. I urge a favorable report for HB 684 to strengthen our communities and protect renters.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Jawando", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Will Jawando