



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 24, 2023

HB 691

**Landlord and Tenant - Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects - Tenant Remedies
(Tenant Safety Act)**

House Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 691 establishes that a landlord that offers a dwelling for rent is deemed to warrant the dwelling fit for human habitation; authorizing a single tenant or tenants' organization to seek remedies on behalf of a group of tenants for a landlord's failure to repair serious and dangerous defects on the leased premises; authorizing a tenant, a group of tenants, or a tenants' organization to bring a civil action for money damages if a landlord fails to repair certain defects within 90 days of the court finding the conditions complained of exist.

The Conference believe decent, safe, and affordable housing is a human right. Catholic teaching supports the right to private property but recognizes that communities and the government have an obligation to ensure the housing needs of all are met, especially poor and vulnerable people and their families. In a time of rising homelessness and when many workers' wages are stagnant and living expenses are rising, it is important to ensure housing security.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a **favorable** report on House Bill 691.