



Testimony to the House Environment & Transportation Committee  
House Bill 303 – Baltimore City – Air Conditioning in Residential Rental  
Units

Position: Favorable with amendments

March 10, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair  
House Environment & Transportation Committee  
Room 251, House Office building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

cc: Members, Environment & Transportation Committee  
Honorable Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility supports HB 303 requiring air conditioning in residential rental units from June 1 to September 30 in units where tenants are < 3 years old, or older than 65 with the amendment that pregnant women be included as well.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is statewide evidenced-based, organization of over 900 physicians, other health professionals and supporters, that addresses the existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis and the issues of pollution and toxics' effect on health as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, social and racial justice. As an organization founded by physicians, we understand that prevention is far superior to treatment in reducing costs; death, illness, injury, and suffering.

According to the EPA, [heat is the greatest killer](#) of weather-related events in the United States although interventions could prevent many of these deaths This bill seeks to provide one intervention by requiring rental units to provide air conditioning under certain conditions. Because of urban heat islands this an important bill for Baltimore renters.

The CDC describes [additional groups at greater risk](#) from heat illness that include children (no age given), those with chronic heart disease, minorities especially low income and minority, outdoor workers, athletes and pregnant women. This list covers many Baltimore renters and I

hope before long, all Baltimore renters will have this protection. Pregnant women deserve special mention here and I believe that this bill should be amended to include them.

A recent review of [harms from heat exposure for pregnant women](#), both acute and chronic, listed complications in the pregnancy including pre-eclampsia increased stillbirths, congenital abnormalities, premature deliveries, ruptures membranes, birth defects, low birthweight, and increased neonatal mortality.

[Montgomery County Council passed a](#) bill in 2020 that required functioning air conditioning services during the summer for all apartments except those in single family homes.

There are landlord requirements in Dallas and Phoenix, cities with climate warmer than Baltimore is presently. Presently [24 states](#) have some requirements for landlords to provide air conditioning.

Maryland is getting warmer and projected to get [even warmer](#) due to fossil fuel emissions forcing our climate. The root solution is serious reduction in climate forcing greenhouse emissions. Tree canopy, insulation, ventilation and other efforts to reduce indoor temperatures in summer months are important to make indoor environments safer during heat waves.

However, for the trajectory we are on, providing air conditioning for vulnerable groups including pregnant women, children, the elderly and probably most inner-city tenants, limited air conditioning in summer months may save lives.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility is a member of Renters United and favors passage of HB 303 with an amendment to include pregnant women.

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