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February 23, 2024

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The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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**HB1114 - Real Property - Landlord and Tenant - Procedures for Failure to Pay  
Rent, Breach of Lease, and Tenant Holding Over**

**Hearing before the House Environment and Transportation Committee,  
Feb. 27, 2024**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

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Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Committee Members,

Jessica A. Quincosa, Esq.  
Executive Director  
Kayla Williams, Esq.  
Deputy Director

Community Legal Services of Prince George's County ("CLS") is a private, non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income Maryland residents. Since 1985, CLS has provided civil legal assistance in Prince George's County. In 2020, CLS extended its services to assist Anne Arundel County residents in landlord-tenant matters, as the need for legal representation increased during and after the pandemic. In addition to legal representation, CLS attorneys have an important role in helping low-income tenants in Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties connect with resources to help maintain housing, while their financial circumstances gradually improve. CLS attorneys have witnessed the challenges that tenants experience when they are at risk of an impending eviction.

Supervising Attorneys  
Ivy Finkenstadt, Esq.  
Kathleen M. Hughes, Esq.  
Amy B. Siegel, Esq.

CLS believes House Bill 1114 is helpful for both tenants and landlords, as it provides tenants fair notice with a specific date set for an eviction, fourteen (14) days in advance of an impending eviction; moreover, it allows landlords to appropriately dispose of personal property left in the unit, after tenants are given a reclamation period to collect personal possessions on the property for ten (10) days after an eviction occurs.

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Currently, landlords are not required to notify tenants in Anne Arundel County when a specific eviction date is set. Although the Anne Arundel County Sheriff's office usually provides eviction notices to Anne Arundel County residents, sometimes tenants receive eviction notices a couple of days prior to their eviction dates; in many instances, tenants are not able to finalize moving arrangements or payments to their landlords, as a result of inadequate notice. Even more concerning, neither landlords nor the Sheriff's office in Prince George's County provide notices to tenants with scheduled eviction dates. When tenants are not provided adequate notice of an eviction date, there is a higher likelihood that they will be unable to exercise their statutory right of redemption ("pay to stay"), coordinate with housing or rental assistance resources, or properly arrange a move from the property with their personal belongings.

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Tenants who are facing eviction are already experiencing some level of instability and uncertainty, as they search for a place to relocate or attempt to address financial setbacks that often involve health-related obstacles. Establishing a specific reclamation period would not only help tenants avoid the potential loss of medicine and other valuable and essential items, but it could help preserve items that are priceless to families, such as photos and heirlooms. It is unfair and cruel to evict tenants who are struggling in these extreme conditions, without proper notice and a reclamation period that could avoid additional losses. Furthermore, HB1114 requires landlords to discard tenants' belongings in an environmentally safe manner after the reclamation period is over. In many Maryland counties, tenants' personal belongings are left in the street and public way after an eviction, creating excessive pollution and litter. HB1114 would help address these ongoing humanitarian and environmental concerns in Maryland by adequately notifying tenants of when an eviction is set to occur, and providing a streamlined process in which a landlord can properly remove and dispose of items that have remained on the property after an eviction.

Finally, it is important to note that nineteen states and D.C. have implemented eviction notice requirements and the opportunity for tenants to reclaim personal possessions. It is long overdue for Maryland to pass legislation to include notification requirements for impending eviction dates and a reclamation period for tenants to collect their personal property during the eviction process.

**For these reasons, CLS urges a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB1114.**

Sincerely,



Golnaz Alemousavi

Staff Attorney

Community Legal Services of Prince George's County, Inc.

Anne Arundel County Eviction Prevention Program

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