



TESTIMONY FOR SB0019
Failure to Pay Rent Proceedings
Prohibition on Rent Increases and Shielding of Court Records

Bill Sponsor: Senator Sydnor
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition
Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair
Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0019 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Currently, a failure to pay rent proceeding cannot be expunged from a tenant's record even if the case is dismissed. Despite the dismissal, landlords unjustly use this as a basis for increasing rent, potentially impacting hundreds of thousands of Maryland families each year. More broadly, any finding in a failure to pay rent proceeding remains on court records indefinitely, punishing a tenant with the possibility of higher rents indefinitely.

SB0019 corrects these injustices by automatically shielding within 60 days the records of a failure to pay rent if the proceeding was dismissed. If the proceeding was not dismissed, a tenant can have their records shielded after providing sufficient justification.

Governor Moore has identified housing as a priority with an estimated shortage in Maryland of 100,000 units and growing. This shortage has led to unjustifiable rent increases, some directed at our more vulnerable residents who may have had trouble paying rent in the past. Higher rents result in more homelessness and increases in other poverty markers. SB0019 would lend some stability to the housing market by requiring District Courts to change recordkeeping procedures.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.