



**Testimony HB 693**  
**House Environmental and Transportation Committee**  
**February 20, 2024**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

HB 693 - This legislation would increasing maximum surcharges for certain eviction proceedings from \$8 to \$93 and prohibiting the District Court from assigning the surcharge against a tenant; altering the priority and criteria in the Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program that are followed by the Department of Housing and Community Development and public housing agencies for providing vouchers and housing assistance payments to families; limiting the maximum security deposit required by a residential lease to 1 month's rent; etc..

Maryland is among the states with the highest eviction filings in the country. The low filing fees do not benefit tenants or property owners in our state. High rates of eviction are correlated with high rates of poor health, economic instability and poor educational outcomes. Communities with high rates of evictions cannot have successful schools and stable businesses. Affordable, stable, and accessible housing and robust housing choice are the foundation upon which just and equitable communities are built. Maryland's current filing system fuels the power imbalance between renters and landlords and puts renters at greater risk of harassment and homelessness and fuels racial inequity.

The consequences of evictions are deep and long lasting and compromise public safety. Funding for the Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program can help stabilize households and communities throughout Maryland.

We urge your favorable report for HB 693.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director