



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony prepared for the
Environment and Transportation Committee
on
Senate Bill 19
March 26, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about rights that affect access to affordable housing. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with three synods in every part of Maryland.

The population considered by **Senate Bill 19**, those who have been civilly enjoined for failure to pay rent, often are people for whom affordable housing is a financial challenge. The circumstances in which that happens may be beyond the capacity of an individual to do much about: cost, income, medical condition, *etc.*

Our testimony leans on that of the Pro Bono Resource Center for the similar House Bill 34 of 2023. (mgaleg.maryland.gov/cmte_testimony/2023/jud/1OWkvqnrwlhrwxCzrQ6gpU-V3JlnOLyiG.pdf)

PBRC represents many clients in this circumstance and reports, significantly, that the majority has already paid the rent due, or no longer live at the property, or are not even the tenant named on the lease.

Senate Bill 19 would likely *allow tenants the opportunity to shield FTPR proceedings where no judgment was entered against them, preserving their future ability to remain housed* according to that previous PBRC testimony. We endorse a legislative outcome that protects a human right to housing.

We ask a favorable report.

Lee Hudson