



TESTIMONY FOR SB0481 Renters' Rights and Stabilization Act of 2024

Bill Sponsor: President Ferguson

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0481 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

Evictions and non-renewals of leases have skyrocketed in Maryland. Approximately **34,000** face eviction each year. Unplanned moves and forced evictions create uncertainty and upheaval and impacts physical and emotional health. Homelessness, the most severe consequence of unstable housing, exposes individuals and families to additional risks, including exposure to the elements, violence, and health hazards that disproportionately affects vulnerable communities.

We need to limit the disruption of unplanned moves and evictions. SB0481 has this potential to lower evictions by increasing the eviction filing fee and preventing it from being passed on to renters; reducing security deposits from two months' rent; giving renters the right of first refusal; and prioritizing families with children under 5 years old and pregnant women in the state's new rental voucher program

According to its fiscal note, this legislation is expected to have the impact of lowering Maryland's highest-in-the-nation eviction filing rate, remove financial barriers to becoming housed, and create new pathways to homeownership. Each of these anticipated impacts are expected to improve economic stability for Maryland residents.

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