

SB0946_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON SB#0946 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Landlord and Tenant - Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects - Tenant Remedies (Tenant Safety Act of 2024)

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0946, Landlord and Tenant - Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects - Tenant Remedies (Tenant Safety Act of 2024)

This bill is a recognition that Maryland needs more affordable housing, but that housing must be safe and free from defects that threaten the health and safety of its residents. Lack of attention to ensuring those conditions for tenants, followed by some landlords, are working in direct opposition to that goal. Rental properties require maintenance and must be warranted as a dwelling fit for human habitation.

Mold, when present, can constitute a life-threatening hazard and this bill clarifies when a mold creates a dangerous condition and defect while providing remedies for that condition to the tenant. It authorizes judicial relief may be sought in a civil action brought over the breach of warranty of habitability. That judicial relief may provide for monies for actual damages, abatement of rent, and termination of a lease under terms favorable to the damaged tenant.

My Jewish faith tells me, in Proverbs 3:33 “The curse of the Lord is in the wicked man's house, but He shall bless the dwelling of the righteous.” Support for the stranger, the poor, the widow, and the orphan are a commandment repeated throughout the Torah. This bill supports that righteous objective with a just treatment of those members of our society most in need of that blessing from institutions and persons capable of delivering those results.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0946.