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Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee
Vice Chair, Rules Committee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Letter of Support for Just Cause Eviction (SB 644) from 35 County and Municipal Elected Officials

Dear members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Over one-third of Maryland families rent their homes, and our residents deserve strong protections to ensure their stability and well-being. From access to employment, food, transportation, and education, an eviction of any family is debilitating. It's time for our Maryland laws and policies to uphold the value of stable housing as a fundamental human right.

Under current state law, with just 60 days' notice, a landlord can refuse to renew a lease and evict a residential tenant for any reason or no reason at all. Thousands of tenants lose their homes through this process, and they must then find new housing, new schools for their children, new transportation routes, and sometimes new jobs.

These evictions put a tremendous burden on renters, with a disproportionately heavy burden on low-wage renters, who have very few other housing options in an increasingly unaffordable housing market. Families of color, single-parent families, and immigrant families face these burdens and hardships the most. Currently, wages do not align with the costs of the housing market. When these families cannot renew their leases, they often find themselves stressed trying to find another housing option suitable for them. Some families can even find themselves facing homelessness because they cannot find another housing option.

Just Cause Eviction requires a landlord to provide a justifiable reason ("cause") when deciding not to renew a lease and must provide this cause in their non-renewal notice to the tenant. This legislation has been introduced in various forms in the state of Maryland for years, and now is the time for it to achieve final passage.

Under current state law, counties in Maryland do not have the authority to address Just Cause Eviction. However, since counties have an important and unique interest in maintaining their residents' housing stability, they should have the authority to implement Just Cause Eviction and decide for their communities. The [2023 Just Cause Eviction legislation](#), would have given authority to Maryland counties and Baltimore City to implement Just Cause Eviction and determine the appropriate circumstances in which a lease can be non-renewed.

Numerous counties, cities, and states throughout the country have adopted Just Cause Eviction laws, including Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New Jersey, and Washington State. There is no

evidence that Just Cause eviction laws have a negative impact on the housing market in any of these jurisdictions.

The undersigned local elected officials urge the Maryland General Assembly to pass Just Cause Eviction legislation in 2024 to provide authority to local jurisdictions to pass local Just Cause Eviction policies.

Signed,

Montgomery County
County Executive
Marc Elrich

Montgomery County
Councilmember
Kate Stewart

Montgomery County
Councilmember
Laurie-Anne Sayles

Montgomery County
Councilmember
Kirstin Mink

Montgomery County
Councilmember
Will Jawando

Takoma Park
Mayor
Talisha Searcy

Takoma Park
Councilmember
Cindy Dyballa

Takoma Park
Councilmember
Jason B. Small

Takoma Park
Councilmember
Cara Honzak

Takoma Park
Councilmember
Terry J. Seamens

Takoma Park
Councilmember
Randy Gibson

Takoma Park
Councilmember
Shana Fulcher

Howard County
Councilmember
Christiana Rigby

Howard County
Councilmember
Liz Walsh

Baltimore City
Mayor
Brandon Scott

Baltimore City
Comptroller
Bill Henry

Baltimore City
Councilmember
Odette Ramos

Baltimore City
Councilmember
Kristerfer Burnett

Baltimore City
Councilmember
Mark Conway

Annapolis City
Alderman
DaJuan Gay

Anne Arundel County
Councilmember
Pete Smith

Prince George's County
Council Chair
Jolene Ivey

Hyattsville
Councilmember
Danny Schaible

Hyattsville
Councilmember
Rommel Sandino

College Park
Mayor Pro Tem
Denise Mitchell

New Carrollton
Council Chair
Briana Urbina

Mt. Rainer
Mayor
Celina Benitez

Mt. Rainer
Councilmember
Danielle S. Carter

Cheverly
Vice Mayor & Councilmember
Amy Fry

City of Bladensburg
Councilmember
Marilyn Blout

Riverdale Park Town
Councilmember
Richard Smith

Fredrick County
County Executive
Jessica Fitzwater

Fredrick County
Council Vice President
Kavonte Duckett

Crisfield City
Mayor
Darlene Taylor

Crisfield City
Councilmember
LaVerne Johnson