

Rodney Demory

SB 644 — Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination Provisions

Position: Support

My name is Rodney Demory. I am 55 years old and have lived in Baltimore city my whole life. I support SB 644 because I have been experiencing ongoing threats of lease non-renewal and retaliation from my landlord for nearly a year.

I have been leasing an apartment in Reservoir Hill since 2020. I love my neighborhood. It's beautiful and my neighbors are great, many of them are friends I've known my whole life.

Early summer of 2023 I found out my landlord wasn't licensed. When I brought this to her attention she was angry and started threatening to take me to rent court for possession of the property. Not too long after that she started increasing my rent randomly every couple of months.

By fall of 2023 she told me and other tenants we had to pay things in the building like fire extinguishers. After simply asking my landlord why we tenants were responsible for paying these safety measures, she proceeded to text and email me nonstop for days threatening to evict me, accusing me of defamation and saying if I kept creating trouble she would increase my rent by \$90. She constantly let me know that she's a lawyer and everyone downtown knows her, reminding me that people would take her word over mine.

Even after I got an attorney through the Public Justice Center, her threats have only escalated. She then sent me a notice to vacate – non-renewing my lease – without stating why. This has taken a great toll on my mental health. I have trouble sleeping and am always anxious and stressed, fearing everyday about my living situation and worrying that one day my landlord will evict me. I cannot enjoy my peaceful neighborhood because my landlord reminds me everyday that she could force me to leave. No one should have to live like this.

It's very important to pass a bill that allows Baltimore City and other counties to pass just cause eviction laws. Without it, tenants like me have no protections against abusive landlords who refuse to renew the lease to retaliate against residents.

For these reasons I urge the committee to vote in support of SB 644.

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