



Nick J. Mosby, *President*
Baltimore City Council

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February 15, 2024

To: **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee**
Re: **SB 644 Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination Provisions**
Position: **FAVORABLE**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Honorable Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, I write to express my enthusiastic support for Senate Bill 644 (SB 644) which would allow local jurisdictions like Baltimore City to enact laws that would help reduce evictions in our communities. This bill will give local jurisdictions the ability to enact rules that fit our community standards for maintaining rental housing stability and safety and comfort for our neighbors. The current arrangement does not permit local governments to pass laws that would foster a healthy rental housing market. State law now essentially allows landlords to pursue eviction on any tenant at the end of a lease regardless of that tenant's payment history or any positive effect they may have in their communities. SB 644 would allow local jurisdictions to enact laws that would prevent a landlord from terminating a tenancy where the tenant has paid on time regularly and also been a good neighbor.

In July 2021 the Baltimore City Council took the unprecedented step of enacting a law like this to prevent evictions during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. We were only able to take that action at that time because of the state of emergency declarations from the federal and state governments in order to prevent the spread of the disease. Landlords at that time were getting around the prohibition on evictions by refusing to renew lease agreements with tenants regardless of payment history or neighborly behavior. As many other corporate entities did at the time, they were aiming to increase rents and profit from a chaotic moment in the housing market. SB 644 would permit us to take permanent action to safeguard against that behavior and encourage stability in our housing market and cohesion among our residential rental communities. Accordingly, I request a favorable report on this bill and look forward to its passage.

Sincerely,

Nick J. Mosby
President, Baltimore City Council