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Danielle Herrmann  
Takoma Park/Silver Spring, MD 20912

**TESTIMONY ON SB0644/HB477 - FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination Provisions**

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

**FROM:** Danielle Herrmann, MSW, LCSW-C

My name is Danielle Herrmann and I am a resident of District 20. As a Maryland Medical Clinical Social Worker and an elderly member of Jews United for Justice, I am submitting this testimony in support of SB644/HB477, Local Just Cause Eviction enabling legislation. Jews United for Justice organizes over 6,000 Jewish Marylanders and allies in support of local campaigns for social, racial, and economic justice.

Helping individuals and families navigate the challenges of living and taking action to advance the safety, dignity, and worth of every person, especially the most vulnerable among us, is a Jewish value. No one should live without a roof over their head, or the threat of landlord retaliation looming over them. Stories I have heard during my time as a Social Worker have furthered my belief in the importance of safe housing.

I made a promise to my pediatric hospice patient before she died that I would share her story of living with housing insecurity. Originally from Guatemala, her name translates to "Star of the Sea." At age 11, she was the sole surviving clinical trial patient of her NIH research cohort. Knowing she was going to die she proudly stated, "I'm contributing to medicine to help find a cure for other children." Her father was a laborer and her mother cared for her 24/7, while raising her younger sister. As a family, they were also grieving the stillborn death of her brother. Due to a water main pipe leak in their yard that their landlord refused to fix, they could not afford to pay rent along with the astronomical water bills the leak was causing. They lived in terror of landlord retaliation and the weaponization of eviction.

When I conducted home health and hospice visits across Central Maryland, I frequently encountered devastating stories like my patients'. I met renters whose landlords refused to make essential repairs. Tenants shared with me their fears and experiences of landlord retaliation, lease renewal denial, and eviction for having complained about the conditions they

were living in. I witnessed the palpable strain on adults and children facing unbearable housing insecurity. I heard innumerable accounts of the adverse ripple effects of eviction displacement, which devastated their health, emotional stability, and human dignity. I saw the inequitable impact on brown, Black, Indigenous and immigrant, Elderly, Disabled, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, households, and communities.

Just Cause Eviction laws will address these issues by providing essential remedies and safeguards for individuals, families, and those of us who advocate on their behalf. By promoting stable housing conditions, these laws strengthen neighborhood ties and community mental health. **I respectfully and strongly urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB644/HB477.**