



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**BILL:** SB 644 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination Provisions

**SPONSOR:** Senators Muse, Carter, and Sydnor

**HEARING DATE:** February 16, 2024

**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings

**CONTACT:** Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

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**POSITION:** SUPPORT

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The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS SB 644 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination Provisions.**

The 2021 Prince George's County Economic Development Platform calls for Prince George's County to grow a diverse, dynamic, and sustainable ecosystem that supports the county's goal to be the economic engine of both the region and the State. Grounded in that vision is the belief that we cannot have meaningful economic development without addressing housing affordability and stability.

SB 644 is enabling legislation that would give authority to Maryland counties to establish "just cause" limitations on lease non-renewals. Without this enabling legislation, counties are preempted from enacting legal protections for Maryland families who face housing insecurity and instability.

Maryland is currently a "no cause" state – which means that landlords can choose to non-renew tenants' leases without any stated cause. As such, individuals, working families and their children face the constant threat of displacement, even when they are not in violation of their lease. In addition to increasing rents and the scarcity of affordable housing options, Maryland renters face the increased uncertainty of involuntary displacement, causing additional household costs to move, and negative impacts on work commutes, access to schools, and instability in their housing record, which can negatively impact their credit access and hence their ability to access future housing options.

One proven way to minimize this uncertainty and support housing stability is through establishing Just Cause provisions. Just Cause requires that a landlord disclose the reason for choosing not to renew an existing tenant's lease. Just Cause does not prohibit landlords who have legitimate reasons for non-renewals to do so. It simply offers a list of options for what "just cause" may include and gives that ultimate authority to localities to decide.

SB 644 recognizes that localities want to assist renting families with stable housing so that they are able contribute long-term to the workforce and the local economy. Requiring that landlords state a legitimate reason for an eviction through lease non-renewal eviction supports the stability of families, neighborhoods, and communities. It can also streamline court processes and reduces eviction filings that may be filed for arbitrary reasons against tenants who are otherwise following the terms of their lease and the law.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS SB 644** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.