



February 28, 2024

Dear Chair Senator Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Senator Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

Quaker Voice of Maryland submits this testimony in FAVOR of SB481– *Renters' Rights and Stabilization Act of 2024.*

We have identified this bill as one of our priorities for the 2024 general assembly because Quakers across Maryland have shared their concern about housing affordability and access. One of the testimonies of Quakerism is equality and we see the Renters' Rights and Stabilization Act of 2024 as providing equal housing protection and opportunity for people living in Maryland who access housing through renting. We see the Act as seeking to reach this equality and improve housing stability by:

- Better protecting current renters from certain evictions. *Protecting housing stability.*
- Securing a "Right of First Refusal" so that if a landlord wants to sell a property that is being rented, the tenants who are renting would be given a chance to buy. *Supports homeownership.*
- Creating an Office of Tenant Rights to advocate for renters in Maryland and provide technical assistance related to the "Right of First Refusal" and information on renters' rights. *Educational opportunity to increase housing stability.*
- Altering the priority and criteria in the Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program. *Creating protections to keep essential rental assistance available at the state level.*

We thank Committee Member Senator Carter for their sponsorship of this bill and urge a FAVORABLE report for this essential legislation.

Sincerely,

Molly Finch

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