



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 16, 2024

SB 644

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

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 644. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 644 authorizes a county to enact local laws or ordinances that prohibit a landlord of residential property from failing to renew a lease during the lease term or seeking to terminate a holdover tenancy without just cause.

Current Maryland law does not allow local legislatures to decide how best to help their renters stay stably housed. As such, working individuals and their families face the threat of displacement even if they are up to date on rent and have adhered to all their lease's requirements. This legislation will help to boost the stability of the housing market by stabilizing families, neighborhoods, and communities to ensure our most vulnerable Marylanders remain housed.

Catholic teaching supports the right to private property but recognizes that communities and government have an obligation to ensure that housing needs of all are met, especially the poor and vulnerable members of our communities. Access to safe and affordable housing is a fundamental human right and this legislation represents a positive step toward achieving this goal.

With the ever-increasing price of housing and rent in particular, this bill might allow those in jeopardy of losing their housing some temporary relief. Accordingly, the Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 644.