



**TESTIMONY FOR HB0103
ACCESS TO COUNSEL IN EVICTIONS – TASK FORCE TERMINATION AND SPECIAL
FUND**

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Rosenberg

Committee: Appropriations

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0103 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Homeownership for many Marylanders not only provides financial stability but it also conveys to children, allowing a family to hold a large asset over time. For those who own a home but struggle to make ends meet, foreclosure represents a staggering loss. Not just homelessness, but financial insecurity for the rest of their lives.

The legislature, recognizing the scope of this problem, created an Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund that would allow low-income homeowners access to legal representation to help keep them in their homes. This program was temporary. This bill, if enacted, would make the program permanent and keep it funded by using funds that are gained from abandoned property in the state. It would move \$14 million per year from the Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund to the Maryland Legal Services Corporation.

This is a critical step towards ensuring that the Marylanders who are struggling the most have a better chance to remain in their homes.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.