



**Testimony to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**SB154 - Access to Counsel in Evictions – Task Force Termination and Special Fund**  
**Position: Favorable**

January 15, 2025

Sen. Guy Guzzone, Chair  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
Cc: Members, Budget and Taxation Committee

Honorable Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund (Economic Action) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future. **We are in strong support of SB154.**

Economic Action runs a Tenant Advocacy program that provides education to tenants about their rights, brief legal advice, and casework assistance to homeowners. In 2024, we served 796 clients, assisting tenants in every county in Maryland. In a number of cases, we are able to effectively advocate for a client and resolve their issues.

At other times, clients reached out to us when they were facing eviction and our upstream interventions would not be effective in those situations. When clients were facing eviction and needed legal representation, Economic Action's staff referred tenants to the nonprofit legal service providers that the ACE Fund supports.

We know that tenants across the state are struggling with mounting rental costs coupled with rising costs of other basic needs. Many of the tenants we serve cannot afford to hire a lawyer to defend their rights. The ACE program is an important and effective intervention for renters across the state. We support the program and its ongoing funding.

For these reasons, we support SB154 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White  
Executive Director

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Economic Action Maryland Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



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