



February 18, 2025

HB709

Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

Environment and Transportation Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 709**. The Maryland 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.

House Bill 709 would authorize counties to pass local laws or ordinances prohibiting landlords from refusing to renew a lease during its term or from ending a holdover tenancy without "good cause." These laws would establish clear requirements and limitations to ensure that tenants are treated fairly and provided with adequate protection against arbitrary or unjust lease terminations. The act is designed to promote housing stability and prevent unfair evictions that can disrupt individuals and families.

The Catholic Church emphasizes the dignity of the human person and the importance of housing as a basic human right. This legislation aligns with the Church's call to uphold the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable by protecting tenants from unjust evictions that disproportionately affect marginalized communities. The principle of the common good is reflected in efforts to ensure that all members of society have access to stable, secure housing, which is essential for individual and family flourishing. Furthermore, the act promotes justice and solidarity by addressing power imbalances between landlords and tenants, advocating for fairness, and fostering compassionate stewardship of resources. Supporting such measures embodies the Church's mission to create a more just and equitable society rooted in love, dignity, and care for all.

House Bill 709 fosters housing security for tenants, particularly vulnerable populations such as low-income families, seniors, and individuals facing systemic inequities. By requiring landlords to provide a valid reason for lease terminations, it reduces the risk of unjust evictions that can lead to homelessness, financial hardship, and community displacement. Stable housing is foundational to healthy, thriving communities and contributes to economic stability by enabling individuals and families to focus on employment, education, and other opportunities without the constant threat of losing their homes.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 709**.