

Dear Members of the **Environment and Transportation Committee:**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA de Maryland. I am a resident of **District 46**. **I am testifying in support of the Tenant Possessions Recovery Act, HB0767.**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Eviction is an intensely stressful event in the lives of individuals and families. In addition to whatever troubles underlie the eviction itself and the struggle to find new housing, people being expelled from their homes face the uncertainty of not knowing when the ax will fall and the panic of trying to make sure they hold onto their personal property when the eviction occurs. Currently, Maryland law requires no advance notice of the specific date of an eviction and, unlike in 38 other states, makes no provisions for safeguarding tenant property.

If someone happens to not be home when the sheriff serves the warrant of restitution, the tenants' possessions are put on the street and left subject to theft or damage. Everything from necessities like clothes and medication, to family heirlooms and photographs, to important documents like birth certificates and social security cards, can be lost this way. The impact ranges from mildly inconvenient to catastrophic. For the surrounding neighborhood, too, these piles of belongings strewn across the sidewalks and streets are an embarrassing and unsightly mess, one common enough to own its own category of 311 requests in Baltimore City.

HB0767 would change the law in two important ways: First, **it requires a landlord to give two weeks' notice of the scheduled eviction date**. Second, **it requires a landlord to safeguard the personal possessions left on the property for 10 days**, giving evicted tenants a chance to reclaim them. Neither of these measures stops the landlord from reclaiming their property; they simply prevent the eviction process itself from being unnecessarily traumatic and punitive.

This issue also goes toward addressing long-standing racial inequities. As of October 2024, the National Equity Atlas estimates that 105,000 households are behind on their rent in Maryland. Of those, they estimate 89% are people of color. As described evocatively in Matthew Desmond's "Evicted" (2016), eviction has been documented to hit Black women tenants hardest because of intersecting prejudices against women with eviction records and housing discrimination against Black people. This compounds with the \$0.60 to the dollar wage gap for Black women to make each item thrown on the street during eviction even harder to replace, deepening an already critical financial hardship.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of the Tenant Possessions Recovery Act, HB0767**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Lindsay Keipper
2425 Fleet St., Baltimore
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore