

GOOD CAUSE

SB0651 (HB0709) Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Demitrius Henriquez with the Montgomery County Democratic Socialists of America, which is a part of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant with *no good reason*. As a result many Marylanders face severe housing instability on top of the crushing economic instability many are experiencing. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. This is completely unacceptable and we should be taking every step possible to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that local organizers, such as myself, can advocate for the needs of their specific community. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws and it is completely undemocratic.

As a tenant organizer it is tragic to see our neighbors forced out of their homes after spending months and years getting to know them. What's worse is when seemingly they do everything right as a tenant and still receive that notice to vacate with little to no explanation. We have been left to speculate on the causes in the past, but deep down we truly know why. They want to shove out long term residents so the unit can be leased at a higher rate or retaliate for tenant organizing among other forms of corruption and discrimination I have seen firsthand. Keeping the law as it is now allows landlords to shield themselves with ambiguity when doing things we all know to be wrong.

Without Just Cause Eviction all other tenant protections are made weaker because the landlord can simply evict any tenant that exercises their rights. This threat alone creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network.

SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Good Cause **House** Committee Template

Bill Title: HB 709 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

From: [YOUR NAME], [TITLE], on behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION IF APPLICABLE]

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Environment & Transportation Committee,

My name is [YOUR NAME] with [YOUR TITLE AND ORGANIZATION IF APPLICABLE], which is a part of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of HB 709 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

HB 709 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

[THIS BILL IS IMPORTANT TO MY ORGANIZATION BECAUSE]

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. HB 709 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. HB 709 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

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