

Tenants Should Not Lose All of Their Belongings During an Eviction

Position Statement Supporting House Bill 767

Given before the Judicial Proceedings Committee

Being forced to leave your home causes significant hardship and challenges for the tens of thousands of Marylanders who are evicted every year. This is often exacerbated by families losing nearly all of their belongings in the eviction process. The Tenant Possessions Recovery Act (HB 767) would mitigate this trauma by requiring that tenants receive 14 days' notice of the eviction date and a 10-day window to reclaim their belongings if an eviction is executed. In Maryland, [when tenants like Sharnae Hunt are evicted from their homes](#), not only do they lose a roof over their heads, many lose their dignity, their personal possessions, and the ability to quickly find another adequate home due to the trauma and fiscal loss.¹ Financial records & children's keepsakes are all moved to the curb or locked in the property. **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports House Bill 767 because it is a critical measure to ensure that tenants have notice of their impending eviction date and a limited period of time to reclaim their personal possessions in case an eviction is executed.**

HB 767 is a sensible bill that brings Maryland in line with the rest of the country on executing evictions. Twenty-eight states and D.C., including New Jersey, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia all require that the tenant be given notice of their eviction date and the opportunity to reclaim their personal possessions after their eviction.

HB 767 is also beneficial to neighborhoods in that it no longer allows for an evicted tenant's belonging to be thrown out on public streets. Currently, in most of Maryland, a tenant's personal belongings are thrown to the curb after an eviction, creating clutter that blocks sidewalks and creates public blight. HB 767 remedies this issue by requiring the landlord to discard of whatever remaining items that are left in a proper and clean fashion.

Finally, HB 767 benefits landlords in that landlords will no longer be required to pay for and bring 4-10 movers on site for the day of the eviction in order to move the tenant's belongings that day. Instead, landlords may store the tenant's possessions in the property or move them to a storage unit at a more convenient time for the 10-day recovery window. For these reasons, **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy urges the committee to adopt a favorable report on HB 767.**

Equity Impact Analysis: House Bill 767

Bill Summary

House Bill 767 ensures that tenants have notice of their impending eviction date and a limited period of time to reclaim their personal possessions in case an eviction is executed.

Background

Evictions are not just a symptom of poverty; evictions cause poverty and homelessness - especially when renting families lose all their belongings. In Maryland, tenants who experience an eviction not only lose a roof over their heads, many lose their dignity, their personal possessions, and the ability to adequately find another home due to the trauma and fiscal loss. Important items like financial records and children's keepsakes are all moved to the curb or locked in the property. The Tenant Possessions Recovery Act would mitigate this trauma by requiring that tenants receive 14 days' notice of the eviction date and a 10-day window to reclaim their belongings if an eviction is executed.

Equity Implications

Homelessness in Maryland is a pressing equity issue that disproportionately affects marginalized communities, including low-income families, people of color, individuals with disabilities, and those with histories of incarceration. Systemic barriers such as the lack of affordable housing, income inequality, and limited access to supportive services exacerbate homelessness, particularly in urban areas like Baltimore. If passed, because people of color are more likely to be evicted, especially Black women, they stand to benefit the most from this law if passed.

Impact

House Bill 767 will likely **improve the racial, health and economic equity** in Maryland.

ⁱ A Glen Burnie Woman Was Evicted Because of a Miscommunication. Experts say the eviction system creates room for error (2022) <https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/community/housing/a-glen-burnie-woman-was-evicted-because-of-a-miscommunication-experts-say-the-eviction-system-creates-room-for-error-QOP43UIC5BAOBGU5NUWQKHBW2E/>