

HB 767 - Real Property - Landlord and Tenant - Procedures for Failure to Pay Rent, Breach of Lease, and Tenant Holding Over (Tenant Possessions Recovery Act)

**Hearing before the House Environment and Transportation Committee,
Feb. 18, 2025**

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and member of House Environment and Transportation,

My name is Susan Allen and I am Policy Lead for the Maryland Poor People's Campaign (MDPPC).

The MD Poor People's Campaign (MDPPC) upholds the right of all Marylanders to have safe and secure housing. House Bill 767 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.

THIS IS IMPORTANT TO MD Poor People's Campaign BECAUSE we have heard testimony from residents in Anne Arundel County and other jurisdictions of the horrors they have experienced when their belongings are moved onto the street by law enforcement or landlord representatives. Children near the Stanton Center in Annapolis have witnessed the possessions of friends tossed onto the sidewalk and have told young children NEVER to touch the toys of evicted neighbors.

Evictions are not just a symptom of poverty; evictions cause poverty and homelessness - especially when renting families lose all their belongings. In MD, [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 adequately find another home due to the trauma and fiscal loss. Financial records & children's keepsakes are all moved to the curb or locked in the property. 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.

This bill would also protect local jurisdictions from future legal liability eviction practices that are unconstitutional. On June 10, 2024, the Fourth Circuit ruled in *Todman v. Mayor* that Baltimore City's eviction law is unconstitutional. 104 F.4th 479 (4th Cir. 2024). The City's law – and similar local laws in Baltimore County, Prince George's County and others – declare a tenant's belongings "abandoned" upon eviction without adequate notice and a reclamation period. By giving renters notice of their eviction date and an opportunity to collect their belongings through HB 767, localities will no longer be at risk of litigation and financial loss.

HB 767 is a sensible bill that brings Maryland in line with the rest of the country on executing evictions. Washington D.C., 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. Twenty-eight states and D.C. require the tenant be given notice of their eviction date and a limited window to reclaim their personal possessions.

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 into the street 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 sight for the day of the eviction in order to move the tenants' 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.

MD POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN urges a favorable report on HB 767.

Respectfully, Susan Allen

3463 Rockway Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403

Susanallen0@mac.com