

Written Testimony of Leah Robinson, MPH.
In Support of House Bill 0709 - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)
Position: Support (FAVORABLE)
Hearing: February 18, 2025, 1PM
Baltimore, MD

To: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB0709 - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction). The views I express here are my own and do not represent those of any organization or agency with which I am currently or have previously been affiliated.

My name is Leah Robinson, and I am a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, studying Health & Public Policy. Prior to beginning my doctoral degree, I worked for several years in New York City's Department of Homeless Services, as well as with Yale School of Public Health's Housing & Health Equity Lab where I conducted research at the intersection of housing and health. These experiences have given me firsthand insight into the significant impact safe and stable housing has on individual and community health and well-being.

Through my work and research, I have seen the profound harms of homelessness and housing instability, highlighting the urgent need for policies like HB0709 to prevent unjust evictions and keep people housed. I have spent countless hours speaking with individuals forced to live in emergency shelters, on the streets, in parks, or in their cars, as well as those at imminent risk of losing their home through eviction. My conversations have reinforced what a growing body of research also confirms – homelessness and eviction take a severe toll on physical and mental health. Both lead to increased stress, depression, and anxiety, while also making it significantly harder to manage acute and chronic illnesses, take necessary medications, access healthy foods, and attend medical appointments.

As noted, there is substantial [research](#) supporting that homelessness and eviction are public health crises. Research shows that adults experiencing homelessness have a mortality rate [3.5 times higher](#) than those who are stably housed, and receiving an eviction judgment is associated with a [40% increase](#) in mortality. “Just cause” eviction policies, along with other policies such as Right to Counsel and emergency rental assistance, have been [proven](#) effective in reducing eviction rates and promoting housing stability. By keeping people housed, these policies also serve as powerful tools to promote positive health outcomes throughout the state.

The passage of Right to Counsel for tenants in 2021 was a crucial step toward advancing housing and health equity in Maryland. However, additional policies, such as HB0709, are required to continue addressing the full scope of the eviction crisis. Strengthening tenant protections, reducing evictions, and promoting housing stability will not only prevent displacement and homelessness, but will also create healthier and stronger communities across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.