

Date of Hearing: February 18, 2025
Linda Rae Bergofsky
Poolesville, MD 20837

TESTIMONY ON HB709 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Linda Bergofsky

My name is Linda Bergofsky. I am a resident of District 15. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB709 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).

By way of background, I am a member of Oseh Shalom synagogue in Laurel, MD and serve as the chair of its Social Justice committee. I am also an ally of Renters' United Maryland and CASA of Maryland. I am writing in support of this bill because I have seen how evictions can devastate families when corporate landlords and property managers do not have any restraints on bad acts.

If you ever walked or driven down a street and have seen all sorts of items strewn on a sidewalk or curb, you have probably witnessed the aftermath of an eviction. You see clothes, books, furniture, toys, and family pictures dumped unceremoniously; sometimes there are people picking through looking for anything of value. Do you ever wonder about the people behind those items or why they got evicted? Would it surprise you to know that in FY 24, corporate landlords filed eviction cases against 5,104 families in our state without providing a reason.

When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks; and, renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers. 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.

Enabling Good Cause Eviction laws will not force landlords to renew leases of tenants who have done something wrong under their leases and it will not restrain the development of new rental housing. Nor will this enabling legislation affect local jurisdictions' ability to pass rent stabilization laws. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason. **For this reason, I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 709.**