

**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:** Barbara Schaffer

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

My name is Barbara Schaffer, resident of Rockville, MD, District 17. 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).**

As a citizen, a parent, and a member of Jews United for Justice, I am concerned with the amount of homelessness in Maryland especially among our Black population and how it affects children. 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 in their homes.

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. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

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.

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.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on HB 709.