



HB 709: Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

Testimony of the Maryland Independent Living Network

SUPPORT – Favorable

House Environment & Transportation Committee, February 18, 2025

The Maryland Independent Living Network is a coalition of the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council and the seven Maryland-based Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs are created by federal law. CILs work to enhance the civil rights and quality of services for people with disabilities. There are seven CILs located throughout Maryland, operated by and for people with disabilities. CILs provide Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services to individuals with disabilities in their communities.

HB 709 offers hope for stability for families who rent their homes and have a family member with a disability. Our State's rental housing crisis is well documented. At Centers for Independent Living (CILs), we frequently assist people with disabilities in the search for affordable and affordable, accessible housing. CILs also assist in facilitating home modifications for families needing accessible features in their homes. The cost of such modifications generally falls on the renter. Because people with disabilities live in poverty at a rate twice that of their non-disabled peers, they are often searching for rent at lower-than-average market rate. (Families with disabilities *comprise 15% of all extremely low renter households in Maryland.*¹)

CILs work with families who have children that use wheelchairs or have mobility limitations. Imagine assisting a family to locate an affordable rental unit and then finding a way to make modifications to the home so that it is useable for their child. Imagine then, the landlord, decides not to renew the family's lease. The family faces relocation, loss of their local health care provider, their children's home school, home based supports, and a home that was modified to meet their unique needs. The family's stability is upended and replaced with fears

¹ Extremely low renter household refers to households with income that is at or below the federal poverty line or at 30% or less of area median income. "Housing Needs by State", National Low Income Housing Coalition (available at: [Housing Needs By State | National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)).

of homelessness, living in substandard housing, living in inaccessible housing and the stress of not having much time to move. Simply put, lease terminations create catastrophes for many households with disabilities.

HB 709 offers hope to families with disabilities who face discrimination in rental housing.

Housing discrimination is insidious. A landlord may not wish to have a renter family that includes a person who is blind or who uses a wheelchair or who has an intellectual or behavioral health disability. The landlord cannot terminate a lease upon learning that a family member has a disability or has become disabled, as that would violate federal discrimination laws. However, when a landlord can terminate a lease for no stated reason, the landlord's actions can be de facto discriminatory, but hard to determine unlawful. And make no mistake, disability discrimination happens. According to a recent report by the National Fair Housing Alliance, discrimination based on disability accounts for more than half of fair housing complaints filed in 2023 and the total number of housing discrimination complaints has continued to rise over the past several years.²

Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws will prevent serious harm and housing discrimination faced by families with disabilities.

The Maryland Independent Living Network strongly **supports** HB 709 and requests a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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² "2024 Fair Housing Trends Report", National Fair Housing Alliance, July 2024. Available at: [2024 Fair Housing Trends Report – NFHA](#)