



## Testimony of the Montgomery County Young Democrats to the House Environment and Transportation Committee in Support of HB 709-Good Cause Eviction

February 18, 2025

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, members of the Committee:

The Montgomery County Young Democrats (MCYD) urge your support for [HB 709–Landlord and Tenant–Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies–Local Good Cause Termination \(Good Cause Eviction\)](#). This bill will give counties the power to adopt laws banning landlords from evicting renters without good cause, providing much needed protection and housing stability to renters.

MCYD is a club of young Democrats ages 14-35 that work to make Montgomery County and Maryland better places to live, elect Democrats, and get young people involved in politics and advocacy. Many of our members rent or used to rent their homes and have experience with these issues.

All Marylanders deserve the right to safe and affordable housing, and to be able to put down roots in their communities. But right now many renters are evicted or have their leases renewed without any good reason. Some landlords are unscrupulous, retaliating against people who complain about unsafe housing conditions or organize to demand their rights. Every year over 5,000 Maryland families are evicted without providing a reason; in 2024 landlords filed 5,104 “no cause” eviction cases. Getting evicted is a huge burden and often traumatic for individuals and families, who must scramble to find housing, who lose many or most of their possessions, and who sometimes become homeless.

HB 709 will help stop these abuses and shield tenants. It is local enabling legislation, meaning that it allows Maryland counties to adopt their own “good cause” laws that meet their needs and provides clear standards for these laws. The bill includes a list of reasons for which landlords can evict people under the laws, including breaching the lease or damaging the property, disorderly conduct, breaking the law, refusing to let the landlord inspect or repair the property, repeated minor lease violations, and repeatedly refusing to pay rent. Landlords can also evict people if they or their families personally want to use the property, if they are doing major repairs, or if they want to remove the property from the market for a year or longer.

Without good cause eviction laws, some landlords non-renew leases as discrimination against people who have housing vouchers or because of their race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. Proving unfair discrimination is very difficult for these renters, who don’t have easy access to resources or information. Many Black families and children especially live with the threat of eviction looming over their heads.

Many apartments and other housing units already require that landlords have good reasons to non-renew or evict someone. This bill would only allow counties to extend that policy to other landlords, protecting tenants. HB 709 also exempts very small landlords—owners of five or fewer rental units—from these requirements.

Eight states—California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington, as well as the District of Columbia—have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Right now Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

[In a 1944 speech to Congress](#), President Franklin Roosevelt urged “the adoption of a second Bill of Rights under which a new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all, regardless of station, race, or creed” and mentioned “the right of every family to a decent home” as one of these rights. Following in that tradition, MCYD believes that housing is a human right and that renters need to be protected from unjust non-renewals and evictions. If renters are not doing anything wrong, they should not be forced to leave their homes.

We thank Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins and Senator Anthony Muse for their work on HB 709 and urge the House Environment and Transportation Committee to vote for this bill.

Thank you and please contact us at [mocoyoungdems@gmail.com](mailto:mocoyoungdems@gmail.com) with any questions.

Sincerely,

The Montgomery County Young Democrats