

Dear **Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted along with Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. I am also submitting this testimony in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident and mom-and-pop landlord of **D46**. My mother managed her mother's property as a landlord for decades for the small Chestertown apartment building her family had rented out since the 1920s, and then my wife and I became landlords when we rented out our first rowhome on Fleet Street in Baltimore. **I am testifying in support of HB0709.**

HB0709 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.¹ Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

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

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 the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, HB0709.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Preston Ford
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