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TESTIMONY ON BILL 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 House
Committee on Environment and Transportation

FROM: Marci Greenstein

My name is Marci Greenstein. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this **testimony in support of HB709, “Local Good Cause Termination.”**

I am former co-president of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, Maryland, which has over 400 members, many of whom are active in social justice, social services and public policy work both as professionals and volunteers. While I am testifying today solely on my own behalf, I know that my congregation is deeply concerned that our citizens locally and across Maryland are treated fairly with respect to housing. Our Jewish values as well as our ancient texts place a high priority on housing because it protects not just one person or one family, but future generations.

At a meeting of social justice organizations that I recently attended, I was appalled to hear individuals describe how their landlords had failed to renew their leases or issued eviction notices to retaliate against them for complaining about conditions in their buildings needing repair or complaining about violations of local law. Apparently, this is not a new practice. But it was news to me. The power to unfairly remove a tenant or a family without cause, resulting in trauma as well as hardship, is incomprehensible. Clearly, such a practice should be outlawed.

We know that there is much housing insecurity, especially in Montgomery County where housing prices are high. This places even greater power in the hands of

landlords who can refuse to renew a lease capriciously, for no reason at all. Even the fear of losing their lease, which hangs over the heads of renters, denies them their right to safe housing. Enacting this “good cause to evict” enabling legislation is a logical and necessary answer to such overreach. Maryland renters deserve this modicum of protection from unfair treatment.

I appreciate this Committee passing “good cause to evict” last year. **I urge this Committee to return a favorable report on HB709.**