



Testimony - HB 1257, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Fee Disclosures
Favorable

House Environment and Transportation Committee

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Honorable Chairman Korman & Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

SEIU Local 500, as one of Maryland's largest public sector unions representing over 23,000 workers, expresses our support for House Bill 1257, which seeks to enhance transparency in the rental housing market by requiring landlords to fully disclose mandatory fees associated with residential leases. This legislation is a necessary step in ensuring fairness, accountability, and consumer protection for Maryland renters.

One of the most significant challenges tenants face is the lack of clarity regarding the full cost of renting a home. Too often, prospective renters are drawn to listings advertising an attractive base rental price, only to discover additional mandatory fees once they begin the leasing process. These undisclosed fees—ranging from administrative costs to required amenity charges—can place an unexpected financial burden on tenants and make it difficult for them to accurately budget for housing expenses.

House Bill 1257 addresses this issue by requiring landlords offering five or more dwelling units to:

- Clearly disclose all mandatory fees alongside advertised rental prices, preventing misleading advertising.
- Provide prospective tenants with a written, itemized list of all fees, including the amount, purpose, and due date.
- Prohibit landlords from imposing undisclosed mandatory fees after a lease agreement is signed.

By ensuring that rental fees are disclosed upfront, this legislation promotes transparency and allows renters to make fully informed housing decisions. Additionally, the bill empowers the Department of Housing and Community Development to provide guidance to tenants and impose penalties on landlords who fail to comply with these disclosure requirements.

Furthermore, HB 1257 grants local jurisdictions the flexibility to adopt even stronger tenant protections, ensuring that communities can tailor policies to meet the needs of their residents.

Housing is one of the most significant financial commitments for Maryland families. The ability to understand the full cost of tenancy before signing a lease is not just a matter of financial prudence—it is a matter of fundamental fairness. House Bill 1257 ensures that renters are treated fairly in the leasing process and that Maryland's rental market operates with the transparency and integrity that all residents deserve.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1257. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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