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Testimony

HB709: Landlord Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenants – Local Good Cause Termination

February 18, 2025

FAVORABLE

Honorable Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing to urge your support for **HB709 Landlord Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenants – Local Good Cause Termination.**

HB709 will provide jurisdictions with the authority to enact local “Good Cause” eviction ordinances. These laws protect renters from arbitrary and retaliatory lease terminations that destabilize the lives of working people, their children, and their communities.

The Baltimore City Council passed a law in 2021 to prohibit landlords from evicting someone after the end of a lease for 180 days after the end of the State of Emergency, and that only specific causes for eviction were allowed before then. Our law department warned us then that we could be sued because it was not in the Baltimore City Council’s power to make laws regarding landlord/tenant matters. We received additional information that during a state of emergency we may not be sued. However, Baltimore City was the subject of litigation as a result of our actions, and the law was rendered moot before the bill expired on Dec 31, 2021.

Therefore, HB709 is vital. The Baltimore City Council wanted to take significant action to help our renters, and HB709 would give us the authority to do that in holdover cases.

I have a resident now who could really use this law. She has been a good tenant, paid her rent, but when she reported that something needed to be repaired, the landlord gave her the notice to end the lease without any cause for why she would be removed.

I urge your favorable report for this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14