



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
HB 1257 – Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Fee Disclosures
SUPPORT

Good afternoon, Chair Korman and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Rockville City Councilmember Adam Van Grack, and I thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1257. Thank you to Delegates Vogel, Allen, and Stewart, for sponsoring this important bill to support great transparency and protections for renters.

The Rockville Mayor and Council unanimously support HB 1257, which addresses fundamental issues in Maryland’s rental market: fee transparency, fairness, and consumer protections. Renters should never have to deal with hidden or deceptive costs when making such an important financial and contractual commitment.

For many Marylanders, securing a rental home is one of the most significant financial decisions they make. Yet, too often, renters are lured into rental homes by advertised prices that do not reflect the true cost of living in that home. Only after signing a lease—or sometimes even after moving in—do tenants discover additional fees for services, such as: trash collection, parking, standard package delivery, or mandatory administrative charges. These undisclosed fees can add hundreds of dollars to a renter’s monthly housing costs, making it difficult for individuals and families to budget effectively.

Our Rockville Mayor and Council have received multiple concerns about housing providers sharing new fees like an unexpected basic package delivery fee of \$20 a month regardless of whether the resident has received packages or not! Additionally, the common lack of clarity on trash fees and how residents are charged for those fees are problematic. Sometimes Rockville renters are seeing two fees, including flat and variable charges per month. Often, there exists no transparency on how these fees have been calculated. For example, parking fees can range from \$50 to \$100 to \$200 a month, which can be an extra \$2,400 a year.

HB 1257 takes a critical step toward fairness and consumer protection by requiring landlords to disclose all mandatory fees upfront in rental listings and lease agreements. This bill ensures that renters are making fully-informed financial decisions before signing a lease, allowing them to compare properties more accurately and avoid unexpected

financial strain. HB 1257 would also increase competition between providers and support better pricing for renters.

As an amendment, we would even support requiring housing providers to also provide a list of optional fee costs so that residents are aware of fees that may be considered later. Transparency in rental agreements is not just about fairness—it is about housing stability.

By supporting HB 1257, we are advocating for a more honest and equitable rental market where tenants are treated with the same respect and transparency that consumers expect in any other major financial transaction. I urge the committee to vote in favor of this bill to protect Maryland renters from misleading pricing practices and to uphold the principle of financial clarity in housing. Thank you for your time and consideration.