

**Bill Title: HB 767 - Real Property - Landlord and Tenant - Procedures for Failure to Pay Rent, Breach of Lease, and Tenant Holding Over (Tenant Possessions Recovery Act)**

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Tenika Gilliam

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Environment & Transportation Committee,

My name is Tenika Gilliam and I am a Marylander. I believe House Bill 767 is a critical measure to ensure that tenants have notice of their impending eviction date and a limited period of time to reclaim their personal possessions in case an eviction is executed.

This bill is important to me because I have witnessed too many people becoming homeless due to retaliation from a landlord after the tenant requested mold for instance to be addressed. The landlord evicted them and moved in another person who was desperate to find a place to live. We need to avoid this revolving door. No one should be put in the situation of being homeless just because someone is abusing their power. It costs a lot of money to move and people lose all of their things when they get evicted so when an eviction is not justified - it should not happen.

**Evictions are not just a symptom of poverty; evictions cause poverty and homelessness - especially when renting families lose all their belongings.** In MD, when tenants like Sharnae Hunt are evicted from their homes, not only do they lose a roof over their heads, many lose their dignity, their personal possessions, and the ability to adequately find another home due to the trauma and fiscal loss. Financial records & children's keepsakes are all moved to the curb or locked in the property. The Tenant Possessions Recovery Act (HB 767) would mitigate this trauma by requiring that tenants receive 14 days' notice of the eviction date and a 10-day window to reclaim their belongings if an eviction is executed.

This bill would also protect local jurisdictions from future legal liability eviction practices that are unconstitutional. On June 10, 2024, the Fourth Circuit ruled in *Todman v. Mayor* that Baltimore City's eviction law is unconstitutional. 104 F.4th 479 (4th Cir. 2024). The City's law - and similar local laws in Baltimore County, Prince George's County and others - declare a tenant's belongings "abandoned" upon eviction without adequate notice and a reclamation period. By giving renters notice of their eviction date and an opportunity to collect their belongings through HB 767, localities will no longer be at risk of litigation and financial loss.

**HB 767 is a sensible bill that brings Maryland in line with the rest of the country on executing evictions.** Washington D.C., New Jersey, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia all require that the tenant be given notice of their eviction date and the opportunity to reclaim their personal possessions after their eviction. Twenty-eight states and D.C. require the tenant be given notice of their eviction date and a limited window to reclaim their personal possessions.

HB 767 is also beneficial to neighborhoods in that it no longer allows for an evicted tenant's belonging to be thrown out on public streets. Currently, in most of Maryland, a tenant's

personal belongings are thrown into the street after an eviction, creating clutter that blocks sidewalks and creates public blight. HB 767 remedies this issue by requiring the landlord to discard of whatever remaining items that are left in a proper and clean fashion.

Finally, HB 767 benefits landlords in that landlords will no longer be required to pay for and bring 4-10 movers on sight for the day of the eviction in order to move the tenants belongings that day. Instead, landlords may store the tenant's possessions in the property or move them to a storage unit at a more convenient time for the 10-day recovery window.

**I urge a favorable report on HB 767.**