



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
SB 651 – Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies –
Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)
SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Good afternoon, Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I am Monique Ashton, Mayor of Rockville. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the City of Rockville in support of SB 651, which would authorize a county to adopt a good cause eviction ordinance. We thank Senator Muse for sponsoring this important legislation.

Good cause eviction prohibits a landlord from failing to renew or terminate a residential lease without reasonable justification. A stable home provides a foundation for overall well-being, and being unfairly forced to move can uproot a household from their community, social network, and employment, and can also lead to homelessness. These risks are especially acute for low-income and otherwise marginalized renters, many who may fear to speak up about their living conditions, discrimination, or other illegal behavior from landlords due to fear of their lease not being renewed in retaliation.

Although this legislation would not apply to municipalities, the Rockville Mayor and Council take the issue of housing stability seriously and support steps to move the State in a direction that provides more housing security for tenants. We care deeply about our community, wherein nearly half of the households are renters. Many residents reach out to our city seeking assistance in cases where they feel their lease has been terminated or not renewed unjustly, and currently we are limited in how we may help those residents. As a part of an overarching effort to improve housing affordability and stability across the City of Rockville, we have developed 43 action items and would like to be able to add consideration of a good cause eviction ordinance to that list. ***In that vein, we respectfully request an amendment to the bill language to enable municipalities to enact such legislation, in addition to counties.***

In conclusion, strong and fair tenant protections will make Maryland and Rockville a more fair, equitable, and desirable place to live. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to provide SB 651 with a favorable with amendments report. Thank you.