

Friday, February 14, 2025



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee and the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of Baltimore City. I am testifying in **support** of **HB0709 / SB0651**.

HB0709/SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

All Marylanders, regardless of race, class, or zip code, deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes. Renters do not report hazardous conditions and therefore endure unsafe housing out of fear of eviction. As a result of this housing instability and lack of protection for renters' rights, whole neighborhoods suffer.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they choose to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or based on race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction-enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a legally valid reason.

Washington, DC and eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of *only five states* that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

More than 30,000 Marylanders are currently experiencing homelessness. As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing legislation enabling local Good Cause Eviction laws would save state money on support programs by providing a no-cost way to prevent more homelessness and housing instability, strengthen our communities, and keep corporate landlords in adherence with fair housing law and standards.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, HB0709/SB0651**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
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