



Testimony - HB 1257, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Fee Disclosures
Favorable
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 26, 2025
Terrence Cavanagh
On Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Smith & Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

SEIU Local 500, as one of Maryland's largest public sector unions representing over 23,000 workers, expresses our support for House Bill 1257, which seeks to increase transparency and fairness in residential leasing by requiring landlords to disclose all mandatory fees upfront. This bill is an essential step in ensuring that tenants across Maryland are fully informed of their financial obligations before signing a lease, preventing unexpected financial burdens and promoting fair housing practices.

Too often, tenants enter rental agreements under the assumption that the advertised rental rate reflects the total cost of living in a dwelling, only to later discover hidden mandatory fees for essential services. HB 1257 addresses this issue by requiring landlords who lease four or more dwelling units to clearly disclose all fees in advertisements and provide prospective tenants with a detailed, itemized list of fees before lease signing. Additionally, it prohibits landlords from imposing undisclosed mandatory fees and holds them accountable through enforceable penalties.

This bill also empowers tenants by allowing them to file claims against landlords who fail to comply with these disclosure requirements. Ensuring that tenants have legal recourse is a critical component of promoting accountability in the rental market. Furthermore, HB 1257 allows local jurisdictions to enact even stronger tenant protections, ensuring that communities can tailor policies to their specific needs.

Transparency in rental agreements is fundamental to protecting Maryland's renters, many of whom are already navigating financial uncertainty. By passing HB 1257, the Maryland General Assembly would take a meaningful step toward equitable housing policies that benefit both tenants and responsible landlords.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1257. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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