



TESTIMONY FOR HB1257

Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases – Fee Disclosures

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Vogel

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1257 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Signing a rental lease is quite a financial obligation. Most leases are at least a year with penalties for breaking the lease early. Imagine that you signed a lease thinking that the monthly rental was going to be your payment for the next 12 months, only to discover that there were mandatory fees that were not included in that amount and not disclosed before you obligated yourself to the lease period. Do you now decide to not spend money on food, or transportation, or some other item in order to pay the rent, or try to break the lease and incur the penalties?

Many newer rentals have a condo fee that is separate from the rental price. For example, a rental in Montgomery County could be \$2,000 per month. The condo fee, which is separate, could be up to \$1,500 per month. Together, they would make the apartment, or condo, \$3,500 per month, which is a staggering price increase.

This bill would prohibit landlords from advertising a rental price and not itemizing any additional fees. The additional fees would have to be specified as mandatory or optional, along with the date they are due. This would allow lessees to make productive decisions on whether they can afford the rent package, including the fees.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.