

Bill Title: SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Alexander Lang

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Alexander Lang, a supporter of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

This bill is important to me because I am a renter myself. In the last 5 years, I have moved 3 times. While I have had the luck and resources to do so safely and without eviction, in my time as a resident in many communities, I have witnessed many of my neighbors who have not had this luxury. When I see the plight of these people, I am reminded that my home can also be taken from me without good cause. My previous apartment developed a cockroach problem days into moving in. The management provided pest control that was not up to recommended cockroach extermination procedures and I was either forced to take legal action or attempt to solve the problem myself out of pocket. Because I was afraid to risk eviction, I chose the latter. This became a long process that could have easily been settled if the threat of eviction wasn't there. I will state for the record that my bills there were always paid in full and on time.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property

managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.