



Senate Bill 989

Date: February 21, 2025
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Position: Favorable with Amendment

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose membership consists of owners and managers of more than 207,246 rental housing homes in more than 937 apartment communities. Our members house over 667,000 residents of the State of Maryland throughout the entire State of Maryland. MMHA membership also includes more than 216 associate members that supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry. More information is available at <https://www.mmhaonline.org/>

Senate Bill 989 (“SB 989”) authorizes a Sheriff of a county to establish an Unauthorized Occupant Registry for residential real property. This allows an owner of residential real property, at their option, to enroll their property in this registry which would expedite the removal of unauthorized occupant(s) from their dwelling. A registered owner must submit a request to the Sheriff for the removal of the unauthorized occupant. The Sheriff will then serve a notice to vacate within one week of receipt of the notice and put the registered owner in possession of their property at that time. The Sheriff may charge a fee for the initial enrollment and any subsequent re-enrollment that occurs at least one year after the immediately preceding enrollment or re-enrollment of the property.

This legislation addresses a growing concern in Maryland’s real estate market, namely that an owner’s rights are at risk, and they become entangled with an individual with whom there is no contractual relationship. We would ask to amend the bill to remove language on page 3, lines 18-20 and page 4, lines 22-24 which limits an owner’s ability to use this registry if there is pending litigation related to the property between the registered owner and the unauthorized occupant(s). As an example, this would preclude an owner from seeking a wrongful detainer action if there is an unexpected delay in executing the removal. The intent of the bill is to provide owners with an additional tool to expedite the return of their property and this language may inadvertently remove access to a viable tool.

MMHA stands ready to work with the Sponsors and stakeholders alike and respectfully requests a favorable report with the aforementioned amendments on SB 989. Please contact Matthew Pipkin, Jr. at mpipkin@mmhaonline.org or Ashley Clark at ashley.clark@mdlobbyist.com with any questions or concerns. Thank you.