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**SB 989 – Real Property – Unauthorized Occupants – Sheriff’s Property Registry and Removal  
Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Feb. 25, 2025  
Position: Unfavorable**

My name is Prakash Raghubar, and I am submitting this testimony in opposition to SB 989 and similar bills because they would have caused me to be evicted despite my valid lease. Because the option of an immediate, extra-judicial eviction was not available to my landlord, he filed a wrongful detainer action against me when he decided that he wanted to sell the house. Under this action, I had time to retain an attorney through the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland. This attorney helped me gather evidence of my oral lease and regular rent payments, which were sufficient to get the wrongful detainer case dismissed. Without the time and judicial review built into the process, I would have been evicted quickly without any place to go.

I had been renting a room from my landlord for one year, paying \$800 each month and doing repairs to the building when needed. I repeatedly asked my landlord for a written lease, but he never provided one. In November, 2024, my landlord began refusing my Zelle rental payments and insisting on cash. Around that time, he also refused to make necessary repairs and illegally changed the locks in an effort to get me to move out. Finally he filed a wrongful detainer action against me, alleging that I had no right to be in my home. With the assistance of my pro bono attorney, I collected evidence of my periodic rent payments and text messages demonstrating that I was a rightful tenant. My case was resolved through a stipulated dismissal, which is allowing me time to find another place to live.

If a sheriff has been required to evict me within one week of the landlord’s request, as provided in SB 989, I would not have been able to defend myself. I did not have a written lease, and it took me some time to gather the text messages and payment receipts demonstrating my right to be in the home and my consistent rent payments. I would have been forced to sleep in my car.

I believe that there are many other renters living in situations similar to my own. **I am asking for an unfavorable report on SB 989 to keep the courts involved in the eviction process and protect tenants like myself from immediate and unlawful evictions.**

Thank you for accepting my testimony. If you would like further information, I can be reached at 443-447-2841.