



Council on American-Islamic Relations

CAIR Office in Maryland

6120 Baltimore National Pike, Suite 2D

Baltimore, MD 21228

E-mail: mdoutreach@cair.com URL www.cair.com

Tele 410-971-6062 Fax 202-488-0833

February 24, 2025

Honorable Chair William Smith, Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony Favorable for SB 651 Good Cause Eviction

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), I thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 651 Good Cause Eviction. CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. This bill would establish critical safeguards against unjust evictions by authorizing a county to adopt, by local law or ordinance, provisions prohibiting certain landlords of residential property from failing to renew a lease during the lease period or from terminating a holdover tenancy without good cause; requiring landlords to demonstrate "good cause" before terminating leases or refusing to renew rental agreements.

Maryland families, especially those from marginalized refugee and immigrant communities, are facing a housing crisis exacerbated by arbitrary evictions that strip them of stability and security. The recent eviction of multiple refugee families from the Enclave apartment complex in Montgomery County serves as a stark example of why this legislation is urgently needed.

Dozens of Afghan refugee families—many of whom had fled violence and persecution—have been evicted or are facing eviction from their homes.¹ These families, including elderly individuals and young children, have been left scrambling for emergency housing with little recourse. Their forced removal, without clear justification, underscores the very real impact of Maryland's lack of tenant protections and the necessity of SB651.

Local mosques in Montgomery County, including the Muslim Community Center, have reportedly been compelled to dig deep into their pockets and contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars to assist these families with their expenses. This has placed an undue burden on faith-based communities and is not a sustainable long-term solution.

This legislation would help prevent unjust practices by ensuring that landlords provide legitimate, documented reasons for eviction. SB651 establishes fairness in the rental process and reduces the risk of housing instability, particularly for low-income residents, refugees, and communities of color who already face systemic barriers to secure housing.

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For Maryland residents, home is not just a place to live but a foundation for economic mobility, education, and community engagement. Unchecked evictions not only harm individual families but also strain social services, contribute to homelessness, and disrupt neighborhoods. Ensuring “good cause” protections will create a more just and equitable housing system that prioritizes stability for tenants while preserving landlords’ ability to address legitimate concerns.

We urge the committee to support SB651 and take this critical step toward protecting Maryland’s most vulnerable tenants. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Zainab Chaudry, Pharm.D.
Director, CAIR Maryland
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
zchaudry@cair.com

1. Refugee families at risk as federal funding stops, says Montgomery County councilmember. 7 Feb. 2025. <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/community/refugee-families-evicted-montgomery-county-federal-funding-maryland/65-8ae2873c-44d4-4d80-a18d-6643db8d1692>

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