



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 6, 2025

**SB 556 - Real Property - Fraudulent Possession and Unauthorized Lease or Listing -
Prohibition and Removal**

Chairman Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

As amended, Senate Bill 556 would prohibit the knowing and willful presentation of certain false documents in order to possess real property; prohibiting a person from leasing another real property the person does not own or is not authorized to lease and from listing or advertising for sale real property if the person knows the purported seller is not the owner of the property.

Importantly, it would also authorize the owner of residential property or an agent of the owner to request that a sheriff return possession of residential property to the owner under certain circumstances. The sheriff would be required to serve notice immediately to vacate a property to an unlawful occupant and return possession of the property to the owner; the sheriff would have the authority to arrest individuals while allowing an individual harmed by wrongful removal from a residential property the ability to recover damages.

This legislation would also establish that an owner is not liable to an unlawful occupant of residential property for damage to or the destruction or loss of certain personal property and that that a sheriff is not liable to any party for damages to property resulting from the removal of an unlawful occupant from a residential property.

Amendments were requested by The Maryland Multi-Housing Association, and lowers the damages and time served from the original bill.

I respectfully request a favorable on Senate Bill 556.