



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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**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:** Tonia Chestnut, Maryland Renter, President of the Enclave Tenant Association,

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tonia Chestnut, and I am a renter in Silver Spring, District 20. **I am writing to strongly support SB 651**, which would allow local governments to pass Good Cause eviction laws. Right now, in Maryland, landlords can choose not to renew a lease for no reason at all, leaving families without a home, even when they've paid rent on time and followed all the rules.

As the President of the Enclave Tenant Association, I speak to tenants on a daily basis who come to me because they are afraid to speak up for their rights and demand livable conditions at our apartment complex. This fear is not unfounded; I know of many tenants in apartment complexes around the district that have been retaliated against by landlords just because they submit "too many maintenance requests." Good Cause would help tenants feel comfortable making maintenance requests and also feel safer to speak up for their rights. It is important that the legislature passes Good Cause because it would prevent evictions *before* they happen. Unfortunately not only are retaliatory laws not strong enough, but they only kick in once the tenant is already evicted - which means that the tenant must seek a lawyer and undergo the process to use the retaliatory law while being potentially unhoused or without stable housing. Good Cause ensures that tenants are not at risk of these unfair evictions that can set them back and have deeply negative consequences for their life trajectories.

Good Cause laws don't stop landlords from evicting tenants who break the lease—they just require landlords to provide a legitimate reason for not renewing someone's lease. These laws give renters basic stability and prevent unnecessary displacement.

Right now, Maryland is one of only five states that ban local governments from passing Good Cause laws. Passing this bill would give counties the choice to protect renters in their communities. This is especially important for families like mine, who just want the chance to stay in our homes without fear of sudden and unfair displacement.

Eight states and Washington, D.C., have already passed Good Cause protections. Maryland should too.

**I urge you to support SB 651** so that renters like me have a fair chance to stay in our homes. Thank you for your time and consideration.