



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
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February 18, 2025

February 9, 2025

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

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for Senate Bill 651 (SB651) – Good Cause Eviction. This bill allows counties in Maryland to adopt Good Cause Eviction protections, ensuring that landlords cannot refuse to renew a lease or evict a holdover tenant without a valid reason. It sets clear legal standards for when a landlord may terminate a lease, protecting renters from arbitrary evictions while balancing landlord rights. By preventing unjust lease terminations, SB651 directly addresses housing instability, which disproportionately affects Black Marylanders. **SB651 is a 2025 legislative priority for the Black Caucus.**

Studies have consistently shown that Black renters face higher rates of eviction and housing displacement compared to other racial groups. According to the Eviction Lab, Black renters, particularly Black women, are evicted at twice the rate of white renters, even when controlling for income. In Baltimore City, where Black residents make up over 60% of the population, eviction filings remain disproportionately high, with one in four renters facing an eviction notice each year. The National Low Income Housing Coalition found that landlords file evictions against Black tenants at higher rates than white tenants, regardless of financial hardship, indicating systemic bias in rental housing practices.

For Black Marylanders, housing stability is critical for economic mobility and community well-being. The homeownership rate for Black Marylanders is just 42%, compared to 75% for white households, meaning a majority of Black families rely on rental housing. Without Good Cause protections, landlords can evict tenants for any reason, including retaliation for requesting repairs or advocating for fair housing rights. This practice contributes to neighborhood displacement, economic instability, and increased homelessness in Black communities.

By ensuring that landlords must provide a legitimate reason to refuse lease renewal or evict a tenant, SB651 helps keep families in their homes and prevents exploitative rental practices. The bill also enhances transparency and accountability by requiring landlords to disclose whether they are subject to Good Cause Eviction rules. Furthermore, housing displacement has long-term consequences, as evictions damage credit scores, hinder future housing opportunities, and disrupt children's education—all factors that contribute to the racial wealth gap.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports SB651.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland