

## **SB 651 - MAP - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Abby Snyder, Co-Chair

Position: FAV



## Member Agencies:

211 Maryland  
Baltimore Jewish Council  
Behavioral Health System Baltimore  
CASH Campaign of Maryland  
Energy Advocates  
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland  
Family League of Baltimore  
Fuel Fund of Maryland  
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Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services, Inc.  
League of Women Voters of Maryland  
Loyola University Maryland  
Maryland Center on Economic Policy  
Maryland Community Action Partnership  
Maryland Family Network  
Maryland Food Bank  
Maryland Hunger Solutions  
Paul's Place  
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore  
Welfare Advocates

## Marylanders Against Poverty

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Anne Wallerstedt, Co-Chair  
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## SB 651

### Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

*Judicial Proceedings Committee*  
February 18, 2024

**Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) supports SB 651.**

Currently in Maryland, landlords can evict a tenant without a stated reason and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing uninhabitable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on larger landlord accountability.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 651.

*Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.*

# **SB 651\_FAV\_Thompson.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ajah Thompson

Position: FAV

**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:** Ajah Thompson

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Ajah Thompson and I am a Marylander. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation - not a state mandate - so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

This bill is important to me because I have witnessed too many people becoming homeless due to retaliation from a landlord after the tenant requested mold for instance to be addressed. The landlord evicted them and moved in another person who was desperate to find a place to live. We need to avoid this revolving door. No one should be put in the situation of being homeless just because someone is abusing their power. It costs a lot of money to move and people lose all of their things when they get evicted so when an eviction is not justified - it should not happen.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who - because of centuries of government-sponsored



housing discrimination - are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has no impact on new housing development.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states - California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington - as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

# **testimony good cause senate.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alexander Lang

Position: FAV

**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:** Alexander Lang

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Alexander Lang, a supporter of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

This bill is important to me because I am a renter myself. In the last 5 years, I have moved 3 times. While I have had the luck and resources to do so safely and without eviction, in my time as a resident in many communities, I have witnessed many of my neighbors who have not had this luxury. When I see the plight of these people, I am reminded that my home can also be taken from me without good cause. My previous apartment developed a cockroach problem days into moving in. The management provided pest control that was not up to recommended cockroach extermination procedures and I was either forced to take legal action or attempt to solve the problem myself out of pocket. Because I was afraid to risk eviction, I chose the latter. This became a long process that could have easily been settled if the threat of eviction wasn't there. I will state for the record that my bills there were always paid in full and on time.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property

managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

# **SB651\_ALLISONEVANS\_FAV.PDF**

Uploaded by: Allison Evans

Position: FAV

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: Allison Evans, Bowie, MD Resident

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Allison Evans. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for no good reason and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

This bill is important to me because I recently helped move a friend who was evicted from a property where she had dutifully paid rent on time every time for almost a year. The landlords had slowly made her existence there a living hell, but she had nowhere else to go so she stayed. She feared that if she gave any pushback against the slowly devolving conditions and ever increasing list of rules that they would find cause to evict her. Their final act was to tell her to get out, with no just cause and no warning. Her compliance to their torment had meant nothing after all, and worse, they were allowed to evict her in this manner under current law. I want to reiterate that she had never missed a rent payment, and had followed every one of their rules to the letter.

Rented properties are someone's home. It is not an Air B&B where someone is staying for fun. A person's entire life stems from their home. It's where they should feel safe enough to sleep and have their meals. It's where they raise children and gather with family for the holidays. To take away someone's home for no justifiable reason is an act of violence. It tears apart that person's life.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

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As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

# **SB651\_AnitaLampel\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Anita Lampel

Position: FAV



SB651\_AnitaLampel\_FAV

Date of Hearing 2/14/2025

Anita Lampel  
Bethesda, MD, 20817

**TESTIMONY ON SB#0651 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Landlord and Tenant-Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies-Local Just Cause**  
**Termination Provisions**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee

**FROM:** Anita Lampel

**My name is Anita Lampel. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0651.**

I am a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation, the Womens' Democratic Club of Montgomery County, and Giving Together, a philanthropic group. My Jewish values and ethics call upon me to not abuse the poor or leave them without shelter. From this flows my support of HB0709, which would end evictions of persons at the end of their lease without good cause to do so.

My mother's parents immigrated and lived lives of poverty, seven children in a two-bedroom apartment. How hard was that! And our families in Maryland who make their rent payments, sometimes at the cost of medicine or food, and still do not have leases renewed for no good cause? How can we have this in 2025? And this happens because we would not need legislation if it did not. I was in the Montgomery County Council audience when there was a call from councilmembers for just such a bill so they could address the problems in our county correctly.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0651**

# **SB 651 Good Cause Testimony in Support 2 13 25.pd**

Uploaded by: Anthony Rodriguez

Position: FAV

## **SB 651 – LOCAL GOOD CAUSE TERMINATION (GOOD CAUSE EVICTION)**

### **HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

**2/18/25**

#### **Position: Favorable**

Shore Legal Access (formerly Mid-Shore Pro Bono) supports SB 651 because it will prevent tenants from being evicted without good cause and protect tenants from the adverse financial and psychological effects of unwarranted evictions. This bill authorizes a County to enact, 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. This bill also establishes certain requirements and prohibitions for a local law or ordinance adopted in accordance with the bill.

Shore Legal Access (SLA) connects people on the Eastern Shore with limited financial means to legal representation and essential community resources. Each year, SLS helps over 3,800 people in our communities access the legal system when they would otherwise be shut out. Our small legal team and network of volunteer lawyers provide free legal services for eviction prevention, criminal record expungement, life and estate planning, family law, foreclosure, and consumer debt. These services help families gain financial and housing stability and create safe, secure homes for children.

SLA is a provider of legal services under the Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE) program in 8 Eastern Shore counties (Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester). Tenants on the Eastern Shore have embraced the opportunity to obtain legal representation through the ACE program since the program began in 2022. Since July 1, 2022, SLA's staff and volunteers have represented over 1,660 Eastern Shore tenants with mover favorable outcomes in nearly every case. These services collectively helped tenants reduce their financial burden by over \$368,000. When given the chance to have representation, tenants are taking advantage of that option, and as a result, getting better outcomes.



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**[shorelegal.org](https://shorelegal.org)**

Requiring good cause for evictions would prevent landlords from circumventing Maryland's breach of lease requirements set forth in MD Real Property § 8-401.2, and applicable case law that requires landlords to prove a breach of lease, and that the breach was substantial and warrants eviction. At SLA, we have assisted several tenants with landlords who preferred to terminate leases without cause and bring a tenant holding over (THO) claim in rent court in lieu of a breach of lease claim. This has become a more common practice by landlords on the Eastern Shore. For example, in one case, a landlord terminated our client's lease after a complaint was made about alleged noise caused by our client. Instead of bringing a breach of lease claim, the landlord issued a lease termination notice and our client was evicted for no cause. In another example, our client disputed a charge for damages and soon thereafter she received a lease termination notice citing her non-payment of alleged damages as a violation of the lease and warranting termination. She was issued a 60-day notice to vacate and when she was unable to secure additional housing within that timeframe, a tenant holding over action was filed. A breach of lease action would have been more proper, but these proceedings have much higher standards than a tenant holding over action. Without needing to cite a reason or prove a violation of the lease that warrants eviction, the landlord was able to bypass tenant protections simply by providing a notice of termination. Tenant holding over defenses are typically a matter of proper notice. In addition, there is no right of redemption in a THO action, which means tenants must vacate the premises.

Evictions can be especially traumatic to individuals and families. Clients we represent in eviction cases face the physical loss of their home (and in some cases their personal belongings). They also may suffer from the psychological harm that comes from being forced out of their home, or be forced to live in dwellings that are unsafe. For example, one of our clients lived in a housing unit that a local housing enforcement agency determined was not in compliance with local building and safety codes.

Good cause for evictions is a requirement in federal and state subsidized housing and it is based on sound housing policy that promotes housing stability for our clients and their families. For example, good cause requirements for evictions can have the following benefits:

- Protecting renters from evictions for no fault of their own;
- Providing stability to tenants;
- Discouraging renters from self-evicting when they receive eviction notices from landlords;

- Empowering tenants experiencing poor living conditions, discrimination, or other illegal landlord behavior to advocate for improvements with landlords or file complaints without fear of retaliation; and

- In some cases, protecting tenants from unreasonable rent increases.<sup>1</sup>

SB 651 will provide local governments with the ability to limit the harmful effects of evictions that are not based on good cause. This bill would also significantly improve housing stability, particularly in a housing-scarce area like the Eastern Shore. Localities that enact just cause termination provisions afforded by this measure will be able to provide tenants with a sense of security in their housing situation and prevent homelessness. SLA supports SB 651 and urges the Committee's favorable recommendation on this bill. If you have any questions regarding our position on this bill, please contact Meredith Girard, Executive Director at 410.690.8128 or e-mail [mgirard@shorelegal.org](mailto:mgirard@shorelegal.org).

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<sup>1</sup> See, National Low Income Housing Coalition, "Advancing Tenant Protections, Just Cause Eviction Laws," September 7, 2023.

# **SB 651\_FAV\_Bunch.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ayanna Bunch

Position: FAV

**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:** Ayanna Bunch

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Ayanna Bunch, I am a Marylander and the Co-Chair of the Social Justice Committee of A Wider Circle. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

This bill is important to me because everyone deserves shelter and to know that landlords are using their power to evict people with no cause is an issue for me. We are fighting to stop poverty and homelessness and our people are being thrown out unnecessarily. We are one community, we should be treating one another with dignity.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. [1 in 4 Black children](#) in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism.

The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.



# **SB0651 Good Cause Eviction\_BH.pdf**

Uploaded by: Barbara Hauck

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of District 45. I am a voter, homeowner, and active community member. **I am testifying in support of SB0651.**



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, SB0651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Barbara Hauck**

**3420 Harford Road**

**Baltimore, MD 21218**

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# **SB651\_BarbaraSchaffer\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Barbara Schaffer

Position: FAV

**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:** Barbara Schaffer

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Barbara Schaffer, a resident of Rockville, MD and District 17. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

As a citizen, a parent and a member of Jews United for Justice, I am concerned with the amount of homelessness in Maryland especially among our Black population and how it affects children. Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders in their homes.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

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As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Respectfully,  
Barbara Schaffer  
109 Monument St.  
Rockville, MD 20850

## **SB651\_BeckyBandJain\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Becky Band Jain

Position: FAV

February 18, 2025

**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:** Becky Band Jain

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Becky Band Jain and I live in District 18. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

I moved to Montgomery County from New York City three years ago, and was shocked to see the level of homelessness here. People standing in the medians down Rockville Pike, asking for help. Two years ago, I was lucky to buy a house. I am advocating for this bill as a way to pay it forward, to help others who are less fortunate than I and who may not have a voice.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

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Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored

housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Sincerely,  
Becky Band Jain

## Good Cause House Committee Template

**Bill Title:** HB 709 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

**Position:** SUPPORT (FAV)

**To:** Environment and Transportation Committee

**From:** [YOUR NAME], [TITLE], on behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION IF APPLICABLE]

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Environment & Transportation Committee,

My name is [YOUR NAME] with [YOUR TITLE AND ORGANIZATION IF APPLICABLE], which is a part of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of HB 709 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

HB 709 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

[THIS BILL IS IMPORTANT TO MY ORGANIZATION BECAUSE]

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. HB 709 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. HB 709 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored



housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on HB 709.

# **SB0651 Good Cause Eviction.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brytani Fraser

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee / Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of **District 45. I am testifying in support of SB0651.**



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, SB0651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Brytani Fraser**

**Baltimore, MD 21214**

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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<sup>1</sup>

[https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbro.evictions.fallout.sf2015\\_2.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbro.evictions.fallout.sf2015_2.pdf)

## **SB 651 - Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: C. Anthony Muse

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony

**SB 651: Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination** (Good Cause Eviction)

Good afternoon, Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I hope we can all agree on this fundamental principle: Whether a homeowner or a renter across race, class, and zip code—all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in their communities, and that is the intent of **SB 651**.

We often hear about the urgent need to build more affordable housing, but what we don't hear enough about is how we keep residents in their homes. How do we ensure children stay in the same schools? How do we keep seniors close to their doctors? How do we allow essential workers to remain near their jobs? This bill is about addressing these questions by giving counties the option to pass good cause eviction legislation if they choose to do so.

One key aspect of this bill has been lost in the conversation: This is **local enabling legislation** only. It does not impose a statewide mandate; it simply unties the hands of counties that want to pass good cause eviction laws. If a county does not want to implement such legislation, they don't have to. But if they do, our bill ensures that they can integrate good cause protections with other housing policies to meet local needs effectively.

We have heard from **41 county officials** who want this tool in their toolbox. And this is not a radical idea. **Eight other states**, including Colorado and New York just in the past year, and **23 counties and cities** nationwide, have already passed good cause eviction laws. Maryland, however, is **one of only five states** that outright prohibit counties from doing so. **That kind of refusal to allow local control to meet local needs... that is what's radical.**

At its core, this bill simply requires a landlord to provide a legitimate reason for evicting a tenant. That is not radical it is common sense. If someone is trying to put you out of your home, you deserve to know why. Yet, each year in Maryland, there are over **5,000 eviction cases** where landlords are not required to show any cause for eviction.

The Maryland House of Delegates passed this bill last year in nearly the same form. One of our panelists will speak to the minor changes made, but the most significant revision tightens language around the small landlord exemption. **If you own five or fewer properties in Maryland, you remain exempt.** This means small landlords are not affected. However, this bill ensures that large corporate landlords cannot hide behind multiple LLCs to claim they are small

landlords. The list of **nine legitimate reasons** for eviction remains unchanged from last year's bill.

**So, who does this legislation impact?**

1. **Families facing eviction.** When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families are forced to uproot their lives, disrupting their schools, jobs, and support systems.
2. **Black children.** Due to systemic and structural racism, **one in four Black children in renting households** faces the threat of eviction each year.
3. **Entire neighborhoods.** When renters fear reporting hazardous conditions due to the risk of eviction, properties fall into disrepair, leading to blight and decreasing property values for everyone.

I understand that concerns have been raised about anti-retaliation laws and housing development. I appreciate that discussion, but those issues do not change the central point of this bill: **Untying the hands of counties to make local decisions about their housing policies.** If eight other states and 23 localities can do this, Maryland should not be left behind.

At a time of rising budget deficits and increasing pressure on social services, we must do everything in our power to give Marylanders the opportunity to stay in their homes. This **costs the state nothing**, yet it provides essential protections for working families.

Lastly, this issue is personal to me. As I have mentioned before, I was evicted. I was homeless. Many things were happening at the time, but I cannot imagine a just society where a landlord can remove someone from their home—potentially making them homeless—without providing a valid reason. If counties want to pass laws ensuring that tenants are treated fairly, they should be allowed to do so. That is all this bill seeks to accomplish.

Last year, the House passed this bill. Now, it is our turn to step up. Thank you, and I respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on SB 651.

# **PGCex\_Support\_SB 651.pdf**

Uploaded by: Captain David Coleman

Position: FAV



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**BILL:** Senate Bill 651: Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

**SPONSORS:** Senators C. Anthony Muse, Lam

**HEARING DATE:** February 18, 2025 at 1:00PM

**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings

**CONTACT:** Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

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**POSITION:** SUPPORT

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The Office of the Acting Prince George's County Executive urges **SUPPORT** of **Senate Bill 651: Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**, which would grant Maryland counties the authority to establish "Good Cause" limitations on lease non-renewals and holdover tenancy terminations. This legislation is critical to ensuring housing stability and economic security for Prince George's County families.

As outlined in the Prince George's County Economic Development Platform of 2021, this administration's vision is to foster a diverse, dynamic, and sustainable economy. However, meaningful economic growth is unattainable without addressing the challenges of housing affordability and stability. Stable housing is essential for a thriving workforce, strong local businesses, and healthy communities.

Currently, Maryland is a "no cause" state, meaning landlords can choose not to renew a lease without providing any reason. As a result, individuals and families - many of whom are working professionals, parents, and seniors - face the ongoing threat of displacement, even when they comply fully with their lease terms. The financial and emotional toll of such instability is significant, leading to increased household costs, disrupted education for children, longer commutes, and barriers to securing future housing.

As presented, this proposal offers a simple, balanced solution. It does not prevent landlords from removing tenants for legitimate reasons such as non-payment, lease



violations, or property damage. Rather, it ensures that when a lease is not renewed, there is a clear, stated reason - providing renters with greater security and preventing arbitrary displacements. This approach promotes fairness while streamlining court processes and reducing unnecessary eviction filings.

Importantly, this bill does not impose a one-size-fits-all mandate. It simply empowers local jurisdictions to adopt Good Cause protections based on their community's needs. Providing counties with this flexibility is essential for addressing local housing challenges effectively.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Acting Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS SB 651** and requests a **FAVORABLE** report.

# **CarolStern\_SB651\_FAV..pdf**

Uploaded by: CAROL STERN

Position: FAV

February 18, 2025

**Carol Stern  
4550 North Park Avenue Apt. T106  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815**

**TESTIMONY ON SB651 - FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause  
Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**My name is Carol Stern from Chevy Chase in District 16 and I am a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda. I am providing this testimony in support of SB651.**

Our Jewish tradition's primary concern regarding landlord-tenant relations is the question of permanence. Our tradition teaches us that landlords are forbidden from evicting tenants without due warning and may not evict tenants during the winter months, when new housing will be hard to find. According to the great Jewish sage and philosopher, Moses Maimonides, a landlord must give the tenant sufficient notice before terminating a lease "so that the tenant can look for another place and will not be abandoned in the street". The landlord, Maimonides suggests, will be held responsible if a tenant becomes homeless as the result of eviction. These are the values that I bring when asking you to support this Good Cause Eviction bill.

Nobody should lose their home because of the whims of their landlord. Landlords often retaliate against tenants who organize for their rights, demand that repairs be made, or complain about violations of laws about safe housing conditions. Sometimes this retaliation takes the form of refusing to renew their leases. "Good cause" laws protect tenants from this kind of retaliation, and from being evicted for no reason at all. These laws promote housing stability for tenants and neighborhoods. **This bill would allow counties to adopt "good cause" laws that meet local needs and my county, Montgomery County, is ready to adopt this law.**

**Every person, regardless of race or income, should have a safe and stable home.** But some greedy landlords think that their own profit is more important than safety and stability for black and brown renters, and they let the buildings they own fall into disrepair, or throw whole families out on the street to try to squeeze more money out of the next renters.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB651.**

# **SB 651 - FAV - Engel.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carolyn Engel

Position: FAV

**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:** Carrie Engel, Silver Spring resident

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Carrie Engel, in support of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Thank you,

Carrie Engel

# **SB0651\_FAV\_Noel-Nosbaum.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carrie Noel-Nosbaum

Position: FAV

**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:** Carrie Noel-Nosbaum, District 20 Constituant

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Carrie Noel-Nosbaum. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

I trust that you all have made yourselves familiar with the bill in front of you today, or if not that others will explain it to you. What is important to me today is sharing my story as to why I am in FAVOR of the passing of the Good Cause Eviction Bill.

Currently, I am fighting eviction in court. My defense is retaliation for filing complaints with Montgomery County, organizing a tenants union and costing the owner thousands of dollars in credits to tenants for illegal rent increases and fees under the Rent Stabilization Law in Montgomery County. Retaliation is incredibly hard to prove, and while I have a strong case, I am not guaranteed a win.

The status quo puts all the work on tenants to fight. This costs money in lawyers and lost time at work to go to court, not to mention the psychological effects on one's value as a human being with a voice. Landlords use this to force residents to move when they complain, when they want to increase rents, or when they just don't like someone for whatever reason. As the Super Bowl commercial said, the reasons for the hate are as stupid as they sound.

Passing the Good Cause Eviction Bill will ensure that counties like mine can put into place laws that will stabilize our housing situations. We can fight to hold landlords and owners accountable for safe living conditions without fear of retaliation. The current laws are not enforceable as it's extremely hard to prove, no matter how obvious the retaliation is against the tenant.

Stable housing will attract more people to Maryland, boosting our economy. Currently, many people commute from other states where it is cheaper and there are more protections for tenants. Currently, Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

On that note, I'd like to point out that it is important to ensure that corporate landlords are not allowed to follow their current practice of creating "small landlord" companies when they are actually all part of the same corporation. This is a loophole that they exploit to get around the bills and laws passed in the state and counties.



Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

I hope that my eviction story encourages you to see the importance of passing this bill.

Sincerely,  
Carrie Noel-Nosbaum  
District 20 Resident

# **SB0651\_Good\_Cause\_Eviction\_MLC\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



## **TESTIMONY FOR SB0651**

### **Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Muse

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0651 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

Evictions and non-renewals of leases have skyrocketed in Maryland. Approx. **34,000** households will likely face eviction next year. Roughly 1 in 10 evictions result in a shelter entry, meaning 1,700 households (4,420 individuals) will become homeless. This is an alarming rate of homelessness and it causes a very thorny problem. While needing to ensure that landlords rights are upheld, we also need to ensure that people are not turned out of their homes without good cause.

We believe that this bill strikes that balance. It does allow landlords to terminate a lease or refuse to renew when the tenant has engaged in disorderly or illegal conduct on the premises, or refuses to grant the landlord access to the property, or otherwise breaches the lease conditions. It does not allow the landlord to essentially evict the tenant without good cause and without notice.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

# **BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES--2025 SB 651.pdf**

Uploaded by: Charles Michaels

Position: FAV

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Charles Michaels with Beyond the Boundaries –an Archdiocese of Baltimore program—which is a part of Renters United Maryland. Beyond the Boundaries is submitting this testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

Beyond the Boundaries focuses on educating and advocating for affordable housing – both for renters and homeowners – in Baltimore City and in the surrounding Counties. We also focus on the underlying causes of the affordable housing crisis—systemic racism, the wealth gap and redlining.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason! This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions.

SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network.

SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions.

1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Charles Michaels  
Program Manager  
Beyond the Boundaries  
[cwmichaels@igc.org](mailto:cwmichaels@igc.org)

# **SB 651\_FAV\_Baker.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chissell Baker

Position: FAV

**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:** Chissell Baker

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Chissell Baker and I am a Marylander. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation - not a state mandate - so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

I am writing to urge you to take action to protect Maryland renters from unfair eviction practices. Currently, landlords in Maryland can evict tenants without a justifiable reason, leaving many vulnerable to sudden displacement. This practice is not only inhumane but also destabilizing for families and individuals already facing hardship.

I strongly support legislation that prevents landlords from evicting tenants without a valid reason. This would ensure that renters have security and stability in their homes and are not removed arbitrarily or unfairly.

These protections would provide a basic level of fairness and dignity to renters across Maryland. I urge you to advocate for and support policies that ensure housing stability and prevent unjust treatment of tenants.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some



security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who - because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination - are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has no impact on new housing development.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states - California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington - as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

# **IL Written Testimony - SB 651 - Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chris Kelter

Position: FAV



**SB 651: Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**Testimony of the Maryland Independent Living Network**

**SUPPORT – Favorable**

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 18, 2025

The Maryland Independent Living Network is a coalition of the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council and the seven Maryland-based Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs are created by federal law. CILs work to enhance the civil rights and quality of services for people with disabilities. There are seven CILs located throughout Maryland, operated by and for people with disabilities. CILs provide Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services to individuals with disabilities in their communities.

SB 651 offers hope for stability for families who rent their homes and have a family member with a disability. Our State's rental housing crisis is well documented. At Centers for Independent Living (CILs), we frequently assist people with disabilities in the search for affordable and affordable, accessible housing. CILs also assist in facilitating home modifications for families needing accessible features in their homes. The cost of such modifications generally falls on the renter. Because people with disabilities live in poverty at a rate twice that of their non-disabled peers, they are often searching for rent at lower-than-average market rate. (Families with disabilities *comprise 15% of all extremely low renter households in Maryland.*<sup>1</sup>)

CILs work with families who have children that use wheelchairs or have mobility limitations. Imagine assisting a family to locate an affordable rental unit and then finding a way to make modifications to the home so that it is useable for their child. Imagine then, the landlord, decides not to renew the family's lease. The family faces relocation, loss of their local health care provider, their children's home school, home based supports, and a home that was modified to meet their unique needs. The family's stability is upended and replaced with fears

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<sup>1</sup> Extremely low renter household refers to households with income that is at or below the federal poverty line or at 30% or less of area median income. "Housing Needs by State", National Low Income Housing Coalition (available at: [Housing Needs By State | National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)).

of homelessness, living in substandard housing, living in inaccessible housing and the stress of not having much time to move. Simply put, lease terminations create catastrophes for many households with disabilities.

SB 651 offers hope to families with disabilities who face discrimination in rental housing.

Housing discrimination is insidious. A landlord may not wish to have a renter family that includes a person who is blind or who uses a wheelchair or who has an intellectual or behavioral health disability. The landlord cannot terminate a lease upon learning that a family member has a disability or has become disabled, as that would violate federal discrimination laws. However, when a landlord can terminate a lease for no stated reason, the landlord's actions can be de facto discriminatory, but hard to determine unlawful. And make no mistake, disability discrimination happens. According to a recent report by the National Fair Housing Alliance, discrimination based on disability accounts for more than half of fair housing complaints filed in 2023 and the total number of housing discrimination complaints has continued to rise over the past several years.<sup>2</sup>

Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws will prevent serious harm and housing discrimination faced by families with disabilities.

The Maryland Independent Living Network strongly **supports** SB 651 and requests a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

**Contact Information:**

Chris Kelter, Executive Director  
Accessible Resources for Independence  
443-713-3914  
[ckelter@arinow.org](mailto:ckelter@arinow.org)

Danielle Bustos, MDYLF Coordinator  
Independence Now  
240-898-2189  
[dbustos@innow.org](mailto:dbustos@innow.org)

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<sup>2</sup> "2024 Fair Housing Trends Report", National Fair Housing Alliance, July 2024. Available at: [2024 Fair Housing Trends Report – NFHA](#)

# **SB0651 Good Cause Eviction.docx (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Christina Nemphos

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee / Judicial Proceedings Committee**,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of District 40 and live in the Medfield neighborhood of Baltimore. **I am testifying in support of SB0651.**



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

HB0709/SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. **Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.**<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction**, HB0709/SB0651.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Christina Bell  
1301 W 42nd St, Baltimore, Md 21211  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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<sup>1</sup>

# **SB651\_DHCD\_SUPPORT.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chuck Cook

Position: FAV

**DATE:** February 18, 2025

**BILL NO.:** Senate Bill 651

**TITLE:** Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

### Letter of Support

#### **Description of Bill:**

Senate Bill 651 is enabling legislation that would allow counties and Baltimore City to enact provisions that prohibit landlords – that own six or more rentals units – from failing to renew a residential lease or terminating a holdover tenancy without good cause. The bill defines “good cause”, specifying that it includes instances such as a tenant causing substantial damage to the premises, continually disturbing the peace and quiet of other tenants, engaging in illegal activity on the premises, unreasonably refusing the landlord access to the premises to make inspections or repairs. “Good cause” also includes the landlord taking the leased premises off the rental market, either to make improvements or repairs or for their own use or that of a close relative. The bill also directs the newly formed Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs (OTLA) to develop forms and disclosures used for reporting purposes, and authorized OTLA to adopt regulations to implement the bill’s provisions.

#### **Background and Analysis:**

Under current law, a landlord must provide notice to a tenant of intent to terminate a tenancy, whether the tenant’s lease is expiring, or the tenant is a holdover on a month-to-month or other basis. In most cases, this notice is required 60 days in advance of the termination of the tenancy. This legislation allows counties (and Baltimore City, which enacted its own good cause legislation in 2021) to enact local legislation requiring landlords to renew a tenancy, absent good cause.

Giving Maryland counties the authority to enact such provisions is anticipated to increase housing stability across the state. Studies have shown that encouraging long-term tenancy benefits both renters and communities by slowing displacement and gentrification, maintaining neighborhood stability, and preventing the material hardship of being forced to find new housing, which is particularly disruptive for mothers and young children. Any new tenant protections ultimately enacted under this law will be implemented through the democratic process at the county level and will reflect the diversity of Maryland’s housing market across jurisdictions. Additionally, the exemptions included under the law will help protect property owners, helping to ensure that Maryland maintains a healthy rental housing stock. DHCD supports granting jurisdictions another potential tool to address the housing crisis and keep Marylanders housed.

#### **DHCD Position:**

The Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 651.



# **CDN SB 651 FAVORABLE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Claudia Wilson Randall

Position: FAV



**Testimony**  
**SENATE BILL 651**  
**Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**February 18, 2025**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non- profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities.

SB 651 would allow counties to pass laws extending this "good cause eviction" requirement to larger landlords (owning 6 or more units) in their respective jurisdictions. We support this bill. Good cause eviction provides clarity for renters and owners on why they may be facing an eviction and accountability for owners and managers to ensure that we are meeting a certain standard of practice.

Safe, stable, affordable housing is the foundation of a stable school environment for children, holding onto a job and focusing on the next promotion for workers, and obtaining better health care outcomes for seniors and persons with disabilities. Because of federal funding restrictions, many rental homes already require property owners to state a good reason for any eviction and provide renters with at least 60 days to move before starting an eviction case. Approximately 222,000 homes in Maryland are already protected by "good cause eviction."

By defining the legal grounds on which a landlord can evict tenants or refuse to renew a lease, Maryland can be a better state. Good causes for eviction commonly include failure to pay rent, property damage, disturbance or disorderly conduct, other lease violations, criminal activity in a unit, and intent on the part of the landlord to sell, repair, or move into the unit.

More needs to be done to address the need for homes in Maryland. Our members need streamlined zoning and permitting processes and relief from rising construction and insurance costs. We need additional financial supports to bring the rent down and make it more affordable to workforce residents and senior citizens. But, we also need to keep residents in the homes they are already renting whenever possible, and good cause eviction supports that kind of stability and transparency for residents.

We urge your support for Senate Bill 651.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network

# **SB 651 - FAV - Turke.pdf**

Uploaded by: Corrine Turke

Position: FAV

**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:** Corrine Turke, Rockville resident

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Corrine Turke, in support of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Thank you,

Corrine Turke

# **IW Testimony, Good Cause - 2-14-25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Courtney Hall

Position: FAV



Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of Interfaith Works (IW) for the 2025 legislative session. IW is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides emergency shelter, supportive housing, essential needs and employment programs to over 35,000 residents of Montgomery County, MD, every year.

IW strongly urges the passage of HB709, which is a critical measure to protect Maryland's most vulnerable residents – particularly families, children, and racial and ethnic minority communities. This bill would empower Maryland counties to enact local legislation requiring landlords to renew leases unless there is just cause for eviction. Granting this authority will enhance housing stability, lessen reliance on shelters, and reduce the harmful consequences of forced displacement.

The Benefits of HB709 for Montgomery County:

**Increased Housing Stability:** Long-term tenancy benefits both renters and communities by slowing displacement, maintaining neighborhood stability and reducing material hardship. Montgomery County accounts for 19% (1,144) of the Marylanders experiencing homelessness. During 2023, 34,813 Montgomery County tenants received failure to pay rent notices. So far this year, 32,760 have, indicating that evictions are increasing and will probably eclipse last year's notices. The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development has found that forced relocations are disruptive and emotionally damaging, particularly to mothers and children.

**Decreased Reliance on Shelters:** Evictions not only contribute to the homeless total but require many to seek housing in low-barrier shelters. IW manages four shelters in Montgomery County, each of which is filled beyond capacity. It costs \$35,578 per year for every person who endures chronic homelessness. Much of this cost is related to shelter. It is less costly to keep people in their homes than to serve them after they become homeless. Most evicted tenants are forced to compete for the already scarce amount of affordable housing or seek housing in shelters.

HB709 would provide Montgomery County with an essential tool to mitigate the devastating effects of current eviction practices. IW urges a favorable committee report and asks for your full support in passing this bill to protect Maryland's most at-risk populations.

*Debra*

Debra S. Munk  
Chair, Board of Directors

*Courtney*

Courtney Hall  
CEO

# **HB0709-SB0651 Good Cause Eviction.pdf**

Uploaded by: Daryl Yoder

Position: FAV



Dear **Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee / Judicial Proceedings Committee**,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of District 44A. **I am testifying in support of HB0709 / SB0651.**



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

HB0709/SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, HB0709/SB0651.**

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Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Daryl Yoder, 309 Glenmore Ave, Catonsville, MD 21228  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# **SB0651\_DavidFriedman\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: David Friedman

Position: FAV

February 18, 2025  
David M. Friedman  
Silver Spring, MD 20905

**TESTIMONY ON SB0651 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** David M. Friedman

**My name is David Friedman. I am a resident of District 14 in Colesville/Cloverly. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB651, Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

I am an active member of Oseh Shalom, a Jewish Reconstructionist congregation located in Laurel, MD. Jewish tradition emphasizes that every person, regardless of race or income, should have a safe and stable home. One text particularly resonates with me - the prophet Micah understood that housing is more than a roof over one's head and that to deny a person safe housing is not only robbing them in the present but robbing their family for generations to come. As a long-time homeowner, I also appreciate the importance of housing stability and am concerned about the challenges that many renters face in Maryland's dynamic housing market. Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for no good reason and as a result too many Marylanders face severe housing instability. SB651 would provide an important tool for both tenants and landlords and would place Maryland in step with many other states and localities that have passed good cause eviction legislation.

This bill is particularly important to protect tenants from arbitrary, retaliatory, or discriminatory evictions, while not undermining legitimate business interests. Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#). As an enabling measure, SB651 allows, but not mandates, local counties to adopt their own good cause laws that meet local needs. It also exempts small landlords, keeping the focus on corporate landlords.

In our dynamic housing market, Maryland's local jurisdictions should have all the tools they need to address the challenge of providing safe, fair, and affordable housing for residents. I **respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB651.**

# **NAACP LDF\_ Written Testimony SB 651 draft FINAL.pd**

Uploaded by: David Wheaton

Position: FAV



**Written Testimony of David Wheaton  
Assistant Policy Counsel  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.**

**Submitted to the Judicial Proceedings Committee of  
the Maryland State Senate  
In Connection with the February 18, 2025 Hearing**

**I. Introduction**

My name is David Wheaton, and I am an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF). LDF offers the following testimony in favor of Maryland Senate Bill 651, which would allow local jurisdictions to prohibit a landlord from failing to renew a lease or from terminating a holdover tenant without cause. Holdover evictions, which Senate Bill 651 would help eliminate, disproportionately affect Black Maryland residents. Good cause eviction protections like Senate Bill 651 are designed so landlords can only evict renters for specific reasons and are aimed at preventing retaliatory or discriminatory evictions. This bill would help renters, particularly Black renters, prevent evictions and decrease housing insecurity. We urge the Committee to give Senate Bill 651 a favorable report.

Founded in 1940 by Thurgood Marshall, LDF is the nation's oldest civil rights law organization. LDF was launched at a time when America's aspirations for equality and due process of law were stifled by widespread state-sponsored racial inequality. For more than 80 years, LDF has relied on the Constitution and federal and state civil rights laws to pursue equality and justice for Black people and other people of color, including fair housing opportunities for Black people. Some of LDF's early victories in the Supreme Court came in *Shelley v. Kramer*, 334 U.S. 1 (1948), and *McGhee v. Sipes*, 334 U.S. 1 (1948), which held that the state enforcement of racially-restrictive covenants violated the Equal Protection Clause. In the decades since those victories, LDF has continued to challenge public and private policies and practices that deny Black people safe and quality housing and free from discrimination. LDF's

mission has always been transformative: to achieve racial justice, equality, and an inclusive society.

## **II. Due to Prior Discrimination, Black Marylanders are Disproportionately Renters—and Disproportionately Face Housing Instability and Hold Over Evictions**

As a result of decades of discrimination in housing, lending, employment, and other areas, Black people are disproportionately likely to be renters, and are more likely to face evictions and other forms of housing instability.<sup>1</sup> Black households have the highest eviction removal count in Maryland—almost three times higher than the white resident eviction rate.<sup>2</sup> SB 651 would protect renters from potential retaliation action from landlords, and will help avoid disproportionate harm to tenants of color, particularly Black tenants.

Tenant protections would help address current day harms that follow the legacy of racial discrimination and segregated housing policies experienced by Black communities. This legacy caused such harms as preventing Black homeownership and pushing Black residents to live in segregated areas of poverty. For decades, the federal government encouraged housing discrimination against communities of color through explicitly racist policies and practices.<sup>3</sup> One federal housing policy that targeted Black Maryland residents was “redlining.” In the 1930s, the federal government endorsed existing patterns of housing discrimination against people and communities of color through a practice that became known as redlining.<sup>4</sup> The former Federal Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), established in 1933, used color-coded maps to represent the perceived risk of lending in particular neighborhoods, with “hazardous” (the highest risk) areas coded in red.<sup>5</sup> HOLC routinely gave Black communities a “hazardous” rating, discouraging lending in those “redlined” areas.<sup>6</sup> In Baltimore, while white neighborhoods tended to fall within the green and blue grades, most of Baltimore’s Black neighborhoods, in east and south Baltimore, were almost exclusively “redlined.”<sup>7</sup> Black neighborhoods in Baltimore suffered from high rents and poor-quality housing, and limited social and city services, leading to

<sup>1</sup> Urban Institute, *The Ghosts of Housing Discrimination Reach Beyond Redlining: Subtitle Why Historical Redlining Maps Are Not Strong Predictors of Present-Day Housing Instability*, (March 15, 2023), <https://www.urban.org/features/ghosts-housing-discrimination-reach-beyond-redlining#:~:text=Because%20of%20a%20range%20of,housing%20cost%20burden%20and%20eviction>.

<sup>2</sup> Tim Thomas, et al, *Baltimore Eviction Map*, The Eviction Study, (May 8, 2020), <https://evictionresearch.net/maryland/report/baltimore.html#:~:text=Black%20headed%20households%20had%20th,e,eviction%20rate%20of%205.2%25>).

<sup>3</sup> Danyelle Solomon, et al., *Systematic Inequality: Displacement, Exclusion, and Segregation How America’s Housing System Undermines Wealth Building in Communities of Color*, Center for American Progress, (August 2019), <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/08/StructuralRacismHousing.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> BRUCE MITCHEL & JUAN FRANCO, National Community Reinvestment Coalition, *HOLC “REDLINING” MAPS: THE PERSISTENT STRUCTURE OF SEGREGATION AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY* (2018), <https://ncrc.org/holc/>.

<sup>5</sup> Id.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Rothstein, *THE COLOR OF LAW: A FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF HOW OUR GOVERNMENT SEGREGATED AMERICA* (2017).

<sup>7</sup> David Armenti and Alex Lothstein, *Baltimore’s Pursuit of Fair Housing: A Brief History*, Maryland Center for History and Culture, (2020), <https://www.mdhistory.org/baltimores-pursuit-of-fair-housing-a-brief-history/#:~:text=During%20the%20early%201900s%2C%20white,against%20and%20segregate%20Black%20Balti,moreans>.

Grade D markings, which was one of the lowest grades.<sup>8</sup> Redlining led to long-term residential segregation and disinvestment in affected neighborhoods and drove the concentration of poverty in communities of color.<sup>9</sup>

Today, Black people continue to struggle to find safe, stable, and affordable housing. Due to historical and ongoing discrimination, there is a large and growing racial homeownership gap. In 2021, Black families in the U.S. had a homeownership rate of 46.4% compared to 75.8% of white families.<sup>10</sup> In Maryland, racial homeownership gap is even higher: while the white homeownership rate is 77%, the Black homeownership rate is 51%.<sup>11</sup> In majority Black Baltimore, the Black homeownership gap is 30.1%.<sup>12</sup> Because they are locked out of homeownership, most Black people rent. In 2021, more than 50% of households headed by Black adults in the U.S. rent their homes according to national Census data.<sup>13</sup> Not only do more Black residents rent, they are also disproportionately likely to spend more than 30% of their income on rent.<sup>14</sup> In Baltimore, approximately 60% of Black renters are housing cost burdened compared to 47% of white renters.<sup>15</sup> This makes residents more prone to evictions.

Evictions have a disproportionate impact on Black Maryland residents. In Maryland, one in four Black children in rental households face the threat of eviction in a typical year.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, zip codes in Maryland with a higher percentage of Black renters face a higher rate of total evictions. According to an analysis by the ACLU, Black renters nationwide had evictions filed against them at nearly twice the rate of their white peers.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, research indicated that race bore a stronger relationship to eviction than poverty, property value, or a range of other

<sup>8</sup> Id.

<sup>9</sup> Jason Richardson, et al, *Redlining and Neighborhood Health*, National Community Reinvestment Coalition, (2020), <https://ncrc.org/holc-health/>

<sup>10</sup> Rashawn Ray, Andre Perry, & David Harshbarger, *Homeownership, Racial Segregation, and Policy Solutions to Racial Wealth Equity*, Brookings Institute, September 1, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/homeownership-racial-segregation-and-policies-for-racial-wealth-equity/>

<sup>11</sup> Stateline, *Black Families Fall Further Behind on Homeownership*, Maryland Matters, (October 15, 2022), <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2022/10/15/black-families-fall-further-behind-on-homeownership/#:~:text=The%20overall%20homeownership%20rate%20is,Black%20homeownership%20rate%20is%2051%25.>

<sup>12</sup> Id.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Demographic Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units*, American Community Survey, 2019, [https://data.census.gov/table?q=Owner/Renter+\(Householder\)+Characteristics&tid=ACST1Y2019.S2502](https://data.census.gov/table?q=Owner/Renter+(Householder)+Characteristics&tid=ACST1Y2019.S2502)

<sup>14</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, *Gap Report*, (March 16, 2023), <https://nlihc.org/gap>

<sup>15</sup> Public Justice Center, *The Economic Impact of an Eviction Right to Counsel in Baltimore City*, (May 8, 2020), <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/4408380/PDF/Eviction-Reports-Articles-Cities-States/baltimore-rtc-report-final-5-8-2020.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Maryland Eviction Prevention Funds Alliance, *Assessment of Maryland's Need for Eviction Prevention Funds (EPF) and the Estimated Fiscal Impact of EPF*, (December 19, 2023), [https://www.mdeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Assessment-of-Marylands-Need-for-EPF-and-Directional-Fiscal-Impacts-of-EPF\\_FINAL\\_2023.12.19-1.pdf](https://www.mdeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Assessment-of-Marylands-Need-for-EPF-and-Directional-Fiscal-Impacts-of-EPF_FINAL_2023.12.19-1.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Sophie Beiers, Sandra Park & Linda Morris, *Clearing the Record: How Eviction Sealing Laws Can Advance Housing Access for Women of Color*, AM. C.L. UNION (Jan. 10, 2020), <https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/clearing-the-record-how-eviction-sealing-laws-can-advance-housing-access-for-women-of-color>



factors.<sup>18</sup> These burdens fall even harder on Black women, for whom one in five will face an eviction in their lifetime.<sup>19</sup>

Black Maryland renters are also disproportionately affected by holdover evictions. Maryland is a "no cause" state, which means a landlord can decide to not to renew a lease without any stated cause. Most eviction filings are due to tenants being unable to afford rent, but because Maryland is a "no cause" state, eviction filings can be initiated for a reason other than non-payment of rent, such as retaliation for raising concerns about the conditions of their residence or simply because the lease agreement has expired. These evictions are often referred to as "holdover" evictions. According to new research from LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute (TMI), Black Maryland renters are disproportionately affected by holdover evictions. TMI found that ZIP codes with a higher percentage of Black renters face a higher rate of holdover evictions. A 10-percentage-point increase in the percent of Black renters in a ZIP code is associated with a 14% increase in the rate of holdover eviction warrants and a 10% increase in the rate of executed holdover evictions. Furthermore, TMI's research showed a 10-percentage point increase in the percent of Black renters in a ZIP code was associated with a 35% increase in the rate of total eviction warrants and a 14% increase in the rate of total evictions.

There are also extreme harms that come with evictions. Eviction causes significant increases in homelessness and housing instability, and these effects can last 12 to 24 months or longer after an eviction case is filed.<sup>20</sup> The data suggest that physical and mental health also decline after an eviction filing. Hospital visits often preceded by an eviction filing and visits for mental health-related conditions jumped by more than 130 percent following evictions.<sup>21</sup> These results align with other evidence of eviction's negative physical and mental health impacts on children, including increases in childhood hunger.<sup>22</sup>

### **III. Evictions in Maryland Are Increasing, Including Holdover Evictions, Which Increases Housing Instability in Maryland.**

As local, state, and national eviction moratoriums have ended and pandemic aid helping renters has faded, eviction filings have risen over 50% above pre-pandemic levels in some jurisdictions, nationally.<sup>23</sup> In Maryland, there was a total of 23,567 evictions combined in 2020,

<sup>18</sup> Benjamin F. Teresa, *The Geography of Eviction in Richmond: Beyond Poverty*, RVA EVICTION LAB (2018), <https://cura.vcu.edu/media/cura/pdfs/cura-documents/GeographiesofEviction.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Robert Collinson & Davin Reed, *The Effects of Evictions on Low-Income Household*, NYU L. (2018), [https://www.law.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/upload\\_documents/evictions\\_collinson\\_reed.pdf](https://www.law.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/upload_documents/evictions_collinson_reed.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> James T. Spartz, *Eviction Prevention: Reducing Harm To Households And Society*, University of Wisconsin-Madison Institute for Research on Poverty, (February 2023), <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/eviction-prevention-reducing-harm-to-households-and-society/#:~:text=Eviction%20causes%20significant%20increases%20in,an%20eviction%20case%20is%20filed.>

<sup>21</sup> Id.

<sup>22</sup> Id.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Casey & R.J. Rico, *Eviction filings soar over 50% above pre-pandemic levels in some cities as rents increase*, PBS, June 17, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/eviction-filings-soar-over-50-above-pre-pandemic-levels-in-some-cities-as-rents-increase>

2021, and 2022, which is an average of about 8,000 per year.<sup>24</sup> The last year before the moratorium, 2019, Maryland registered 21,676 evictions.<sup>25</sup> In the most recent full year with data (Oct 2023 through Sep 2024), Maryland landlords filed more than 150,000 eviction warrants of repossessions and executed nearly 16,000 completed evictions according to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. As discussed above, evictions in Maryland disproportionately effect Black Maryland renters.<sup>26</sup> Black households have the highest eviction removal count in Maryland.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, holdover evictions are increasing in Maryland, in January 2019, landlords filed 233 “tenant holding over” cases — compared to 607 in May of 2022.<sup>28</sup> Since August 2020 (when the courts reopened to evictions during the pandemic) through September 2023, holdover eviction filings have exceeded the pre-pandemic monthly average for 37 straight months, reflecting a 117% increase over that period.<sup>29</sup>

Holdover evictions can often be motivated by illegal discrimination based on race or retaliation. Black people live more frequently in unsafe subsidized housing,<sup>30</sup> which could lead to retaliatory actions by landlords. Landlords in low-income communities or developments are more likely to avoid routine maintenance on their units in order to increase their profit—a practice that can disproportionately harm renters of color. Low-income Black renters increasingly live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.<sup>31</sup> In areas of concentrated poverty where property values are declining, landlords who fear that their property is depreciating in value will use various tactics to secure a higher annual rate of return to offset a potential loss

<sup>24</sup> Dwight A. Weingarten, *Evictions, Rising after Rent Assistance Ran Out, Back Near pre-pandemic Levels in Maryland*, Salisbury Daily Times, (December 6, 2023), <https://www.delmarvanow.com/story/news/local/maryland/2023/12/06/marylands-rising-eviction-rate-renews-call-for-tenants-rights/71814753007/>

<sup>25</sup> Id.

<sup>26</sup> Tim Thomas, et al, *Baltimore Eviction Map*, The Eviction Study, (May 8, 2020), <https://evictionresearch.net/maryland/report/baltimore.html#:~:text=Black%20headed%20households%20had%20the,e eviction%20rate%20of%205.2%25>

<sup>27</sup> Id.

<sup>28</sup> Sophie Kasakove, Ryan Little and Nick Thieme, *For Some Maryland Landlords, Filing for Eviction is a Monthly Routine. Tenants Pay the Price*, Baltimore Banner, (August 31, 2022), <https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/community/housing/for-some-maryland-landlords-filing-for-eviction-is-a-monthly-routine-tenants-pay-the-price-HSUABD736VAUZOKX7VZDTR2L3A/>

<sup>29</sup> Jheanelle Wilkins, *‘Just cause’ Eviction Standard Protects Families, Encourages Fairness*, Baltimore Banner, (January 23, 2024), <https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/opinion/community-voices/rental-housing-evictions-maryland-legislation-WMWG67BGQVHFLMDLX2WU353F2E/>

<sup>30</sup> Jill Rosen, *Study: Racial disparities in outcomes for those who grow up in subsidized housing have largely vanished*, Johns Hopkins University, (May 8, 2017), <https://hub.jhu.edu/2017/05/08/black-white-kids-in-public-housing-fare-similarly/#:~:text=Black%20families%20getting%20subsidized%20housing,impoverished%20neighborhoods%2C%20the%20study%20found.>

<sup>31</sup> INSTITUTE OF METROPOLITAN OPPORTUNITY, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY (Apr. 2019), [https://www.law.umn.edu/sites/law.umn.edu/files/metro-files/american\\_neighborhood\\_change\\_in\\_the\\_21st\\_century\\_-\\_executive\\_summary\\_-\\_4-2-2019.pdf](https://www.law.umn.edu/sites/law.umn.edu/files/metro-files/american_neighborhood_change_in_the_21st_century_-_executive_summary_-_4-2-2019.pdf) (explaining that low-income residents are much more likely to live in areas that are economically declining rather than areas that are economically expanding).

when they sell their property later.<sup>32</sup> One of those tactics is to cut back on maintenance, which can lead to tenants living in unbearable conditions.<sup>33</sup> Recently, a landlord in Maryland retaliated against multiple tenants by trying to evict them after they complained about the dangerous conditions.<sup>34</sup> It is often difficult for renters to prove a holdover eviction is discriminatory so many tenants leave their homes before a holdover eviction is filed to avoid permanently damaging their record, even if the potential eviction may be discriminatory or retaliatory.<sup>35</sup> Good cause eviction protections help give renters a better sense of housing security and empower them to hold landlords accountable for uninhabitable conditions without fear of retaliation. SB 651 would allow local jurisdictions to help protect tenants from a constant threat of displacement and help strengthen tenants' ability to complain about unsafe conditions without the threat of possible eviction.

#### **IV. SB 651 will increase tenant protections and reduce the rate of holdover evictions in the state.**

Thousands of evictions occur without landlords ever giving reasons why tenants are being evicted.<sup>36</sup> Particularly for vulnerable low-income tenants, good cause eviction protections benefit tenants by protecting renters from being evicted for no fault of their own and delivering a sense of stability to tenants.<sup>37</sup> SB 651 also would help empower tenants experiencing poor living conditions to advocate for improvements with landlords or file complaints without fear of retaliation. Furthermore, a recent study found jurisdictions that implemented good cause eviction laws experienced a lower eviction rate and lower eviction filing rates than those that did not.<sup>38</sup>

Maryland is in the middle of a housing affordability crisis.<sup>39</sup> There are 207,554 extremely low-income households in Maryland, but only 61,469 affordable and available rental units.<sup>40</sup> A

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

<sup>34</sup> Rob Flaks, *Maryland Legal Aid files Lawsuit Against Somerset County Landlord Found to be Operating Without a License*, WMDT News, (June 14, 2023), <https://www.wmdt.com/2023/06/maryland-legal-aid-files-lawsuit-against-somerset-county-landlord-found-to-be-operating-without-a-license/>

<sup>35</sup> Connecticut Fair Housing Center, *Lets Talk About Expanding Just Cause Protections*, (December 7, 2023), <https://ctfairhousing.org/the-case-for-expanding-just-cause-eviction-protections/#>

<sup>36</sup> Rachel M. Cohen, *The Fight to Make it Harder for Landlords to Evict their Tenants*, Vox, (May 1, 2023), <https://www.vox.com/policy/2023/5/1/23697209/landlords-tenants-good-cause-just-cause-eviction-housing>

<sup>37</sup> Lindsey Duvall and David Foster, *Advancing Tenant Protections: Just Cause Eviction Laws*, National Low income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), (February 7, 2023), <https://nlihc.org/resource/14-1-advancing-tenant-protections-just-cause-eviction>

[laws#:~:text=The%20end%20of%20a%20lease,laws%20benefit%20these%20tenants%20by%3A&text=Protecting%20renters%20from%20evictions%20for%20no%20fault%20of%20their%20own.&text=Delivering%20a%20sense%20of%20stability%20to%20tenants.](https://nlihc.org/resource/14-1-advancing-tenant-protections-just-cause-eviction-laws#:~:text=The%20end%20of%20a%20lease,laws%20benefit%20these%20tenants%20by%3A&text=Protecting%20renters%20from%20evictions%20for%20no%20fault%20of%20their%20own.&text=Delivering%20a%20sense%20of%20stability%20to%20tenants.)

<sup>38</sup> Julieta Cuellar, *Effect of "Just Cause" Eviction Ordinances on Eviction in Four California Cities*, Princeton University Journal of Public & International Affairs, May 21, 2019, <https://jpi.princeton.edu/news/effect-just-cause-eviction-ordinances-eviction-four-california-cities>

<sup>39</sup> Dwight A. Weingarten, *Maryland Housing Secretary Day Estimates 96,000-unit Housing Shortage. Bills Aim to Help*, The Herald Mail, (December 21, 2023), <https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/story/news/state/2023/12/21/administrations-bills-aims-to-address-marylands-housing-crisis/71896971007/>

<sup>40</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, *Gap Report: Maryland*, (March 16, 2023), <https://nlihc.org/gap/state/md>

minimum wage worker in Maryland would have to work 94 hours a week at minimum to afford a two-bedroom apartment.<sup>41</sup> Adding more stress to Maryland renters is the fact that rent prices in Maryland are higher than the national average.<sup>42</sup> With the shortage of affordable housing and increased cost for rental housing, it is important to ensure that low-income renters and renters of color are protected from unwarranted evictions. Good cause eviction protections allow for more tenants to be able to stay in their homes when landlords evict a tenant for an unspecified reason. SB 651 offers the possibility of significantly decreasing the number of holdover evictions by allowing local jurisdictions the ability to craft good cause policies to stop landlords from evicting tenants without cause.

Good cause eviction protection can help reduce the number of evictions in Maryland. One study found local good cause eviction protection ordinances in four California cities lowered eviction rates in those cities.<sup>43</sup> The research showed that good cause eviction protection policies had a significant and noticeable effect on eviction and eviction filing rates in those areas.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, a recent Princeton University study found jurisdictions that implemented good cause eviction laws experienced a lower eviction rate and lower eviction filing rates than those that did not.<sup>45</sup>

New Jersey, California, New York, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Washington have all passed their own versions of statewide good cause eviction laws.<sup>46</sup> These protections have helped renters in these states stay in their homes and prevent landlords from evicting a tenant for an unwarranted reason. There also limited federal protections: the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires all federally subsidized rental properties to provide cause when they nonrenewing a lease.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, the U.S. Department of Treasury which administers the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program, requires good cause to evict a person from a LIHTC unit.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>41</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, *Out of Reach: Maryland*, (2023), <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/md>

<sup>42</sup> Jack Fiechtner, *Rent Prices in Maryland are Higher than the National Average*, ABC News, (April 14, 2023), <https://www.wmdt.com/2023/04/rent-prices-in-maryland-are-higher-than-the-national-average/>

<sup>43</sup> Julieta Cuellar, *Effect of “Just Cause” Eviction Ordinances on Eviction in Four California Cities*, Princeton University Journal of Public & International Affairs, May 21, 2019, <https://jpia.princeton.edu/news/effect-just-cause-eviction-ordinances-eviction-four-california-cities>

<sup>44</sup> Id.

<sup>45</sup> Julieta Cuellar, *Effect of “Just Cause” Eviction Ordinances on Eviction in Four California Cities*, Princeton University Journal of Public & International Affairs, May 21, 2019, <https://jpia.princeton.edu/news/effect-just-cause-eviction-ordinances-eviction-four-california-cities>

<sup>46</sup> Lindsey Duvall and David Foster, *Advancing Tenant Protections: Just Cause Eviction Laws*, National Low income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), (February 7, 2023), <https://nlihc.org/resource/14-1-advancing-tenant-protections-just-cause-eviction>  
[laws#:~:text=The%20end%20of%20a%20lease,laws%20benefit%20these%20tenants%20by%3A&text=Protecting%20renters%20from%20evictions%20for%20no%20fault%20of%20their%20own.&text=Delivering%20a%20sense%20of%20stability%20to%20tenants](https://nlihc.org/resource/14-1-advancing-tenant-protections-just-cause-eviction)

<sup>47</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD, Fact Sheet: Renewing Your Lease, (2022), [https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/RFS8\\_RENEWAL\\_OF\\_LEASE.PDF](https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/RFS8_RENEWAL_OF_LEASE.PDF)

<sup>48</sup> 26 U.S.C. §42(h)(6)(E)(ii)(I)

Two local jurisdictions in Maryland have also passed good cause eviction protections, but these protections cannot be fully enforced until the state of Maryland passes SB 651. Baltimore City and Montgomery County have both enacted good cause eviction protections after seeing an increase in landlords filing holdover evictions during the pandemic. In majority-Black Baltimore, in August and September 2020 alone, there were 233 tenant holdover cases, an 82% increase in activity from the same two-month period a year before.<sup>49</sup> SB 651 would allow these jurisdictions to fully enforce their local ordinances and keep more residents from experiencing housing instability.

## V. Conclusion

Black Maryland renters are disproportionately harmed by holdover evictions, which leads to increase housing instability for Black families. SB 651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to protect their residents from unwarranted holdover evictions. Landlords would have to give a specific reason for not extending or renewing the lease. This added layer of protection helps decrease housing instability for Black renters and is an important step toward ensuring a more equitable relationship between landlords and tenants.<sup>50</sup> For the reasons stated above, LDF strongly encourages the passage of SB 651 and urges that Maryland do more to stop unwarranted holdover evictions against Maryland renters.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions, please contact David Wheaton, Assistant Policy Counsel, at [dwheaton@naacpldf.org](mailto:dwheaton@naacpldf.org).

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<sup>49</sup> Hallie Miller, *During Maryland Rent Moratorium, More Landlords Using Legal ‘Loophole’ as Means to Evict*, Baltimore Sun, (December 30, 2020), <https://www.baltimoresun.com/2020/12/30/during-maryland-rent-moratorium-more-landlords-using-legal-loophole-as-means-to-evict/>

<sup>50</sup> Lindsey Duvall and David Foster, *Advancing Tenant Protections: Just Cause Eviction Laws*, National Low income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), (February 7, 2023)

# **SB651\_DeedeeJacobsohn\_JUFJ\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Deedee Jacobsohn

Position: FAV

February 18, 2025

Deedee Jacobsohn  
North Bethesda, MD 20852



**TESTIMONY ON SB 651 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Deedee Jacobsohn, on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ)

My name is Deedee Jacobsohn and I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 651, Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation, on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ). JUFJ organizes over 6,000 Jewish Marylanders and allies in support of local campaigns for social, racial, and economic justice.

The home is the heart of many aspects of Jewish life, and perhaps because of this, Jewish law requires that we keep everyone housed. The book of Deuteronomy states: if there is a needy person among you, “you must open your hand and lend whatever is sufficient to meet the need [15:8].” The Talmud, the source of Jewish Rabbinic law, interprets the line “sufficient for the need” as providing a house (Ketubot, 67b). The Talmud also includes many laws defining the minimum requirements for safe and stable housing, including limits on when a tenant can be evicted. **The idea of permitting a landlord to arbitrarily refuse to renew a lease and cause tenants to be evicted is anathema to Jewish values, and to the fundamental right to housing.**

In my advocacy work with JUFJ, I have heard from many people—especially immigrant women—who were threatened with eviction. The reasons for said threats? Organizing their neighbors into a tenant union, protesting the substandard housing conditions in their apartments, enriching their community by establishing food hubs, or arranging transportation to their kids’ extracurricular activities. Many tenants who did not have their lease renewed and were compelled to move or face eviction for ‘holding over’ could not even say why it happened, much less fight to prevent it. These people work hard to advocate for their community to have

stable, dependable homes. Yet they live with the constant fear of losing their home and the connections they've built in their schools and neighborhoods due to Maryland's eviction laws.

I recently saw a comment on social media that read something like, 'so do we let tenants stay in their apartments forever just because they're paying rent?' My response is a resounding yes. A stable home is central to a stable community. Let's take the insecurity and fear out of renting, and enable counties to legislate 'good cause' eviction protections.

**On behalf of Jews United for Justice, I respectfully but strongly urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 651.**



# **SB0651-JPR\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND**  
*Association of*  
**COUNTIES**

## **Senate Bill 651**

### *Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: February 18, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 651. The bill would authorize counties to establish laws preventing landlords from failing to renew or terminating leases without just cause.

Several counties have sought the authority from SB 651 to protect vulnerable constituents facing eviction for reasons outside of their control. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, evictions have received increased scrutiny as average household debt due to unpaid rent and volatility in the employment marketplace reached significantly elevated levels. SB 651 simply provides a tool for counties, through their local process that always includes public input and comment, to prevent housing instability and inequity tailored to the needs of their respective communities.

Altogether, this bill provides county autonomy to address the housing needs of Marylanders continuing to face challenges even as the worst of the pandemic has abated. For this reason, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 651 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

# **SB651\_Don Akchin\_FAV Good Cause Eviction.pdf**

Uploaded by: Don Akchin

Position: FAV

SB651\_Don Akchin\_FAV

Date of Hearing TBD

Don Akchin

Baltimore, MD 21210

**TESTIMONY ON SB651 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good  
Cause Termination  
(Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Don Akchin

**OPENING: My name is Don Akchin. I am a resident of District 43. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB651, Good Cause Eviction.**

I am a member of Beth Am Synagogue and worked with residents of the Reservoir Hill neighborhood for three decades. I also had the privilege of working for many years at The Enterprise Foundation, the Columbia-based national nonprofit that champions affordable housing. One of the most important lessons I took from my time there was that stable, secure housing is the essential keystone that makes possible other positive life changes, including employment, education, and safe, nurturing communities. Without housing stability, the odds of rising from poverty rise exponentially. The Good Cause Eviction bill would be an important pillar for ensuring housing stability for citizens who rent. Currently landlords may evict tenants for any reason or for no reason at all. Landlords have evicted tenants who complain about repairs that have not been made, who point out unsafe housing conditions, and who organize other tenants to protect their rights. The Good Cause Eviction bill would protect tenants from unjust, capricious acts by landlords by limiting legal evictions to specified just causes.

My Jewish heritage places a high premium on acting righteously toward all men and women. The prophets of the Bible railed against those with power who take advantage of the weak. The Good Cause Eviction bill will go far toward ensuring that dealings between landlords and tenants are more equal, more fair, and more just.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB651.**

## **Good Cause.pdf**

Uploaded by: Douglas Vaughn

Position: FAV

As a Prince George's County resident I support SB 651 and House Bill 709. I believe a tenant who has consistently met their lease obligations, made timely rent payments, and demonstrated a commitment to the property, should be afforded the opportunity to continue renting the unit upon lease expiration, provided the landlord intends to continue renting the property on the open market. As the dream of homeownership becomes increasingly unattainable for many, good cause eviction protections are essential in enabling residents to maintain stability in their communities and promoting accountability among large landlords. In instances where a landlord declines to offer a lease renewal to the current tenant, they should be obligated to provide a legitimate reason, or "good cause," for doing so.

# **SB0651 - Good Cause Eviction.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erica Palmisano

Position: FAV

Dear **Judicial Proceedings Committee**,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of 12. **I am testifying in support of SB0651.**



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. It allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip codes – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would require the landlord to simply state their reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

For over seven years, I was a small private landlord in Howard County. I saw first-hand how a property's value is, in part, a result of the neighborhood around it. Serial evictions do little to improve the value of a neighborhood. This law allows jurisdictions the freedom to choose how they protect their neighborhoods while not burdening small landlords in the process.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, SB0651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Erica Palmisano

5580 Vantage Point Rd, Apt 5, Columbia, MD

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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<sup>1</sup> [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbrow.evictions.fallout.sf2015\\_2.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbrow.evictions.fallout.sf2015_2.pdf)



# **SB651\_FAV\_Lemaire.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erica Puentes

Position: FAV



**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:** Pascale Lemaire, Maryland Renter, member Of the Enclave tenant association

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is Pascale Lemaire, 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.

I strongly support SB 651 because very often, members of management are known to retaliate against tenants who are vocal. A law such as Good Cause would help protect tenants when they stand up for their rights and hold management accountable when facing deplorable conditions, pests, safety issues and infrastructure problems.

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.

# **\_SB651\_FAV\_Yango Oliver.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erica Puentes

Position: FAV



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Info@progressivemaryland.org

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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:** Oliver Yango, Maryland Renter, Member at Large Enclave Tenant Association,

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is Oliver Yango 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.

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.

Sincerely,  
Oliver Yango

Oliveryango@gmail.com

# **\_SB651\_FAV\_Yango.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erica Puentes

Position: FAV



# 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:** Sergine Yango, Maryland Renter, Member of the Enclave Tenant Association

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sergine Yango, 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.

I am strongly supporting SB 651 because there are many instances where management retaliates against residents when they are being vocal about their rights as tenants or when they organize themselves to speak out when they have issues.

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.

Sincerely,

**Sergine Yango**

[sergineyango@gmail.com](mailto:sergineyango@gmail.com)

# **SB651\_FAV\_Chestnut Tonia.pdf**

Uploaded by: Erica Puentes

Position: FAV



# 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.



# **SB651\_FAV\_Yango Israel .pdf**

Uploaded by: Erica Puentes

Position: FAV



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

P.O. Box 6988, Largo MD 20774

[ProgressiveMaryland.org](http://ProgressiveMaryland.org)

[Info@progressivemaryland.org](mailto:Info@progressivemaryland.org)

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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:** Israel Yango, Maryland Renter, Member at Large Israel Yango

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is Israel Yango 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.

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.

Sincerely,  
Israel Yango

[Israelyango@gmail.com](mailto:Israelyango@gmail.com)

## **SB0651 Good Cause .pdf**

Uploaded by: Gwen DuBois

Position: FAV



**SB0651- Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination Provisions (Good Cause Eviction)**

**Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings  
Feb. 18, 2025 at 1:00PM**

**Position: SUPPORT (FAV)**

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**Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is part of Renters United Maryland and urges you to move favorably on SB0651.** SB0651 is enabling legislation that would give authority to Maryland counties to establish good cause limitations on lease non-renewals. **Without SB0651, local efforts are stymied as Maryland families face more unstable housing, fears of retaliation and displacement.**

CPSR is the statewide organization with our 900 supporters. Our mission is to address the greatest public health threats of all: nuclear war and climate change, but we are also committed locally to addressing environmental injustice and health disparities. Health disparities may arise from problems with lack of employment, lack of educational opportunities, unhealthy environments, but nothing is more central to causing health disparities than housing insecurity. Evictions represent the worst outcome of housing insecurity, which includes high housing costs in proportion to income, poor housing quality, unstable neighborhood, overcrowding, and homelessness.<sup>1</sup>

Prevention is the best medicine and there is evidence that “good cause” legislation reduces eviction filings and evictions.<sup>2</sup> In a study comparing 4 cities that did have Just or Good Cause Laws and 4 cities that didn’t in California, evictions and eviction filings were down significantly in the cities that did, compared to the cities that did not have such laws.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-frm-asst-sec-111918.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://jpia.princeton.edu/news/effect-just-cause-eviction-ordinances-eviction-four-california-cities>

Eviction and eviction filings can have a negative impact on health. A recent review<sup>3</sup> of the best designed studies looking at the harms from eviction filings and evictions on children from birth to age 9 found the following:

- 1) A recent eviction was associated with worse mother-reported child health status at age 5 years.
- 2) Evicted children had more hospitalizations and worse access to energy, health care, and childcare.
- 3) For a cohort of at risk 9-year-old children experiencing evictions in the preceding year, there was an association with cognitive losses compared to non-evicted children that were equivalent to the loss of one full year of schooling.
- 4) Evictions of pregnant women were associated with bad birth outcomes including premature birth and low birth weight.
- 5) A study in Cleveland found that by age 2, when there was an eviction filing history, there was a drop in lead testing and increase in lead levels compared to other children and even worse where there was actually an eviction.

Housing is health. Young children exposed to overcrowding and/or multiple moves in one year, were more often reported by their caregivers to have poor health, impaired educational, social or emotional skills, and were measured to have low weight compared to other children.<sup>4</sup>

In older children and adolescents, a history of multiple moves has been associated with mental health problems, substance abuse, increased behavior problems, poor school performance, and increased risk of teen pregnancy: negative outcomes which may handicap them in their adult lives.

SB0651 recognizes that local legislatures want to assist renting families with stable housing so that they are able contribute long-term to the workforce and the local economy. Requiring that a landlord state the reason for a non-renewal eviction boost helps families, neighborhoods, and communities.

CPSR is a member of the Renters United Maryland, a statewide coalition of renters, organizers, and advocates, and **we urge the Committee's report of Favorable on SB0651**

Gwen L. DuBois MD, MPH  
President,  
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility  
gdubois@jhsph.edu

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<sup>3</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2803667>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134514/>

# **SB0651 Good Cause Eviction.pdf**

Uploaded by: Holly Powell

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of **District 46. I am testifying in support of SB0651: Good Cause Eviction.**



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

HB0709/SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, SB0651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Holly Powell**

**2308 Cambridge Street**

**Baltimore, Maryland 21224**

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore





# **SB651\_JacobSimone\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jacob Simone

Position: FAV

February 18, 2025

Jacob Simone  
Baltimore City, MD 21211

**TESTIMONY ON SB#651 - POSITION FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Your Full Name

**FROM:** Jacob Simone

My name is Jacob Simone and I am a resident of District 40. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB651, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination Provisions.

I am a landlord with a rental property in District 10 in Baltimore County, and I rent and live in an apartment in Baltimore City. I am a proud member of the Jewish community and belong to Beth Am Synagogue in Reservoir Hill. Jewish teachings are explicit about the importance of safe and stable housing for people and families. Every person, regardless of race or income, should have a safe and stable home.

The tenants of my rental property are a married couple who had trouble paying their monthly rent last year because one of them lost their job. Instead of evicting them, I worked with them to pay off their balance - and I'm still doing so. We all experience hardship, and losing the roof over your head as a result makes it exponentially harder to recover from whatever is ailing us. Individuals or families that lose their home face dire consequences from potential homelessness to difficulties accessing employment, transportation, health care, food, education. Especially when there isn't a breach of the lease, keeping people in their homes should be a priority.

While SB651 would still give landlords the ability to evict or not renew a lease due to the tenants' lack of rent payment, this legislation is an important step to keeping renters in their homes *without infringing on the rights of landlords*. This bill would allow counties to adopt "just cause" laws that meet local needs to require landlords to renew residential leases unless they have a "just cause" to terminate the lease, such as wanting to occupy the property themselves, having a close relative move in, taking the property off the market, and tenant breach of lease.

Keep tenants in their homes. Make landlords AT LEAST cite a reason for non-renewal of a lease. We all benefit when our neighbors are housed and have housing stability. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB651.

# **Good Cause Eviction 14FEB 2025 S.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jan Kleinman

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of **District 46**. Until last year, I was renting an apartment myself. This bill's protections would have eased my mind, and will ease life for many other Maryland renters. Furthermore, as a teacher, I know first hand how much better children learn when they are stably housed. **I am testifying in support of SB 0651.**

SB 0651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to assist the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, SB0651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Jan Kleinman**

250 President ST Unit 508

Baltimore, MD 21202

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# **SB651\_Jeffrey Rubin\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jeffrey Rubin

Position: FAV

February 18, 2025

Jeffrey S. Rubin  
Potomac, MD 20854

**TESTIMONY ON SB651- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Jeffrey S. Rubin

**My name is Jeffrey Rubin. I am a resident of District 15. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB651, Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

The home is a focal point for a web of social interactions that includes friends, neighbors, schools, and other civic institutions. It follows that individuals, their families, and entire communities fall apart because of eviction. For years, eviction has been a significant problem in Montgomery County, as well as other jurisdictions across our state, and it remains a serious concern as tenants face ongoing housing shortages and rising rents.

SB651 is designed to allow local jurisdictions to choose to enact protections for tenants, while respecting the needs and rights of the landlord. It outlines an array of circumstances that justify a landlord's decision not to renew the lease of a renter. These conditions could include various contractual obligations to the landlord, such as failure to pay rent or damage to property, and specific provisions that allow the landlord to make other use of the property. However, it does not permit the landlord to displace renters in the absence of a good cause.

Unfortunately, there are instances when landlords choose not to renew a lease to rid themselves of residents who ask for repairs of unhealthy, substandard housing or engage in tenant-based community organizing. These are unjust practices that put the burden of redress on the tenant, who typically has quite limited financial resources and little familiarity with the legal system.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB651.**



# **CHC Testimony to Committee - SB651.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jessamine Duvall

Position: FAV



Written Testimony on Senate Bill 0651

February 14, 2025

Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Committee members,

I am the Executive Director of Columbia Housing Center, a Howard County based nonprofit organization with a mission to champion and sustain thriving, integrated neighborhoods in and around Columbia, MD. We offer a variety of housing support programs serving low and moderate income households, including an affirmative marketing housing referral service that furthers fair housing, a rent subsidy program for students at Howard Community College, and a program to help voucher holders find homes in Howard County's competitive rental market.

In the past year, we have received about 550 requests from people seeking housing in Howard County. About 25% of these home seekers indicated that they have a previous eviction on file. Unfortunately, we have to turn most of these people away, because it is nearly impossible for people to get approved for rental housing in our area once they have been evicted. Any legislation that better regulates landlords helps prevent bad actors from using retaliatory tactics to remove tenants who complain about unsafe or unhygienic conditions, unfair treatment, or discrimination.

In our work with students, voucher holders, and home seekers, we have seen instances of leases not being renewed due to one or two late rent payments, even though those payments were ultimately made. We have heard from tenants whose leases were not renewed after they complained about pests or noise. Many of the people we serve are single mothers with young children who do not receive adequate (or any) child support. They are working and/or attending school so they can improve their situation and create a better life for their families. A notice to vacate or eviction can cause an inordinate amount of stress and completely upend their lives, as these parents hustle to find alternative housing. In many cases, because of their limited housing options and a short time frame, a move means that their children have to change schools, leaving their friends and beloved teachers behind.

The Columbia Housing Center supports SB651, which will enable counties to enact prohibitions on landlords from failing to renew a tenant's lease without good cause. Housing instability is an

increasing problem across Maryland particularly for people with limited financial and other supporting resources that we serve every day. This a common sense law that would contribute to keeping people housed by holding landlords accountable for their treatment of tenants just as tenants are held accountable by their leases.

We hope that with the authorization of SB651, local jurisdictions—including Howard County—will take action to pass this common sense tenant protection that will put renters on a more equal legal footing with landlords.

Importantly, this bill provides both tenant and landlord protections. This law does not create a burden for landlords - they would simply be required to tell a tenant why they are being evicted, while being given multiple justifiable reasons to cite for that eviction. It will protect landlords from claims of unfair or arbitrary practices, because the requirement to provide the tenant with a reason for their eviction will necessarily show that the eviction is valid.

We are appreciative of Senator Muse and Senator Lam for sponsoring, and of this Committee for considering of this legislation that will enable and encourage local jurisdictions to provide a much needed tenant protection.

Columbia Housing Center requests that the Judicial Proceedings Committee issue a favorable report on SB651.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessamine Duvall", with a stylized, overlapping flourish at the end.

Jessamine Duvall  
Executive Director  
Columbia Housing Center

# **Good Cause Eviction (SB651) Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jessamine Duvall

Position: FAV

**HOWARD COUNTY HOUSING AFFORDABILITY COALITION**  
**Testimony on Senate Bill 0651**

February 14, 2025

Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Committee members,

The Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition supports SB651, which will enable counties to enact prohibitions on landlords from failing to renew a tenant's lease without good cause.

Housing instability is an increasing problem across Maryland particularly for people with limited financial and other supporting resources. Why does Maryland explicitly prohibit instituting a common sense law that would contribute to keeping people housed by holding landlords accountable for their treatment of tenants just as tenants are held accountable by their leases? The Coalition hopes that with the authorization of SB651, local jurisdictions—including Howard County—will take action to pass this common sense tenant protection that will put renters on a more equal legal footing with landlords.

This bill provides both tenant and landlord protections. Landlords would simply be required to tell a tenant why they are being evicted, while being given multiple justifiable reasons to cite for that eviction.

We are appreciative of Senator Muse and Senator Lam for sponsoring, and of this Committee's consideration of, this legislation that will enable and encourage local jurisdictions to provide a much needed tenant protection.

The Coalition requests that the Judicial Proceedings Committee issue a favorable report on SB651.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jackie Eng*

Jackie Eng, Coalition Coordinator

Cc: Senator Anthony Muse and Senator Clarence Lam

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*The Housing Affordability Coalition is composed of 40 organizations and over 900 individual members and allies. Our goal is to achieve community understanding, policy making and regulatory decisions that will lead to an increase in—and equitable access to—Howard County affordable housing. We seek to contribute to a community- wide recognition that Howard County's economic vitality is dependent upon access to jobs, housing that individuals and families can afford, a quality educational system, and resident mobility.*

# **SB 651\_Jo Shifrin\_FAV .pdf**

Uploaded by: Jo Shifrin

Position: FAV

Hearing: February 18, 2025  
Jo Shifrin  
Bethesda, MD 20817

**TESTIMONY ON SB# 651 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Jo Shifrin

**OPENING: My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 651, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

I've been a resident of Montgomery County for the past 10 years. In that time, I have seen both a housing shortage and a continuing escalation in the price of housing. My support for this legislation comes from my grounding in Jewish values. Housing is central to Jewish beliefs. Among these values are *Tikkun Olam*, an obligation to make the world a more fair and equitable place for people to live; and *Dei Machsoro*, an obligation to make sure that everyone has what they need to live and thrive.

Currently, corporate landlords can refuse to give a reason when not renewing a lease. As a result, more than 5,000 families are made homeless each year because of an eviction. This creates fear and makes tenants uncomfortable confronting landlords and property managers when their homes are inhabitable.

This is enabling legislation: it gives local jurisdictions the *right to pass a law* that requires landlords to give a reason when not renewing a tenant's lease. It is *not a state mandate*.

This legislation would enable local jurisdictions to pass laws that provide transparency and accountability. It will allow renters to engage with landlords and property managers without fear of retaliation. It will reduce the number of tenants and their families from being evicted despite the fact that they pay their rent, keep the property in good condition, and don't disturb other tenants.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB 651.**

# **Health Care for the Homeless - SB 651 FAV - Just C**

Uploaded by: Joanna Diamond

Position: FAV



**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY**  
**IN SUPPORT OF**  
**SB 651 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover**  
**Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination Provisions (Good Cause**  
**Eviction)**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**  
**February 18, 2025**



Health Care for the Homeless supports SB 651, which would enable local jurisdictions to establish “good cause” limitations on lease non-renewals. This bill expressly grants authority to local legislatures to decide when it is appropriate for rental agreements to be non-renewed. That means local policymakers would be able to determine the kind of “good cause” policy their locality needs, whether by type of building, for certain populations, or under certain circumstances such as a state of emergency. Without SB 651, local efforts are stymied by legal concerns around preemption.

In Maryland, a landlord can decide to non-renew without any stated cause. This means that working people and their children face the constant threat of displacement, even when they follow all the rules. They are under constant pressure to accept declining conditions and increasing rents just to stay in their communities.

We know that there is a plethora of health risks associated with the disruptive displacement caused by eviction. Following an eviction, a person’s likelihood of experiencing homelessness significantly increases. Homelessness historically creates new health problems and exacerbates existing ones. Where you or I could easily manage something like diabetes or hypertension in the year 2022, even HIV, the disruptive displacement following an eviction makes caring for these things exponentially harder and sometimes impossible.

We know that mortality among those experiencing homelessness has escalated over the last 5-10 years. Every year, Health Care for the Homeless gathers for our Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day in which we remember the lives of hundreds of people with the experience of homelessness who died that year. There is no amount of health care that can substitute stable housing.

SB 651 recognizes that local legislatures want to aid their renters in achieving stable housing so that they are able contribute long-term to the workforce and the local economy. Requiring just cause as a precondition for an eviction can be a tailored policy that boosts the stability of the housing market by stabilizing families, neighborhoods, and communities. SB 651 ensures local legislatures can pass enforceable laws whereby no one is arbitrarily deprived of their housing.

For the health and safety of the clients we serve and for all Marylanders, Health Care for the Homeless urges a favorable report on SB 651.

*Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland’s leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We deliver medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care,*

*social services, housing support services, and housing for over 11,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.*

*Our Vision: Everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community.*

*Our Mission: We work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it.*

# **WDC 2025 Testimony SB651\_Good Cause Eviction\_Final**

Uploaded by: JoAnne Koravos

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

[www.womensdemocraticclub.org](http://www.womensdemocraticclub.org)

**Senate Bill 651 Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies –  
Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)  
Judicial Proceedings Committee – February 18, 2025  
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2025 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC strongly urges the passage of **SB651**, which is a critical measure to protect Maryland's most vulnerable residents—particularly families, children, and minority communities. This bill would empower Maryland counties to enact local legislation requiring landlords to renew leases unless there is just cause for eviction. Granting this authority will enhance housing stability and reduce the harmful consequences of forced displacement.

The Benefits of SB651:

- **Increased Housing Stability:** Long-term tenancy benefits both renters and communities by slowing displacement, maintaining neighborhood stability, and reducing material hardship. The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development has found that forced relocations are particularly disruptive for mothers and young children.
- **Addressing Racial Disparities in Evictions:** Black renters in Maryland face the highest eviction rates among all racial and ethnic groups. According to the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland, this disparity contributes to higher rates of student transiency, unemployment, and homelessness within Black communities. A Princeton University [study](#) found that while Black renters make up just 18.8% of all renters in America, they account for 51.1% of eviction filings—a clear indicator of systemic inequities in eviction practices.

SB651 provides jurisdictions with an essential tool to mitigate the devastating effects of current eviction practices. WDC urges a favorable Committee report and asks for your full support in passing this bill to protect Maryland's most at-risk populations.

Therefore, we ask for your support for **SB651** and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Tazeen Ahmad  
WDC President

Janet Frank  
WDC Affordable Housing  
Subcommittee

JoAnne Koravos  
WDC Advocacy Co-Chair

# **SB651\_FAV\_MD Poor People's Campaign\_jlwooten.pdf**

Uploaded by: JoAnne Lyons Wooten

Position: FAV

**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:** JoAnne Lyons Wooten on behalf of Maryland Poor People's Campaign

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is JoAnne Lyons Wooten with Maryland Poor People's Campaign. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

Maryland Poor People's Campaign (MD PPC) demands legislation that protects the most vulnerable Marylanders, including poor and low-wealth individuals. Many of these vulnerable renters are families with children.

This Bill is important to Maryland Poor People's Campaign because safe and secure housing for all is a fundamental moral right for all Marylanders; Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., —the founder of our movement—was a persistent Housing Rights champion who played a crucial role in passing the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

57 years after the Fair Housing Act, Maryland still fails to protect the rights of poor and low-wealth tenants by allowing landlords to evict them WITHOUT GOOD (or ANY) CAUSE.

For several years, the Policy Work Group of MD Poor People's Campaign has visited many of your offices to support Good Cause Eviction Legislation. We are dismayed that this Senate committee in 2024 did not vote to bring Local Good Cause to a floor vote.

A week ago, we joined 128 faith leaders from MD Just Power to visit legislative offices in support of SB651/HB709 Good Cause Eviction. Our team was surprised that some legislators did not know Local Good Cause Eviction is an **enabling** bill.

The following overview of SB651 documents the failures of our state to protect renters faced with eviction.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would **enable** local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for **why** they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, **this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate** – so that counties may

pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

**The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason.** This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, **I urge a favorable report on SB 651.**

# **SB0651 Good Cause Eviction-Support-Jford.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Ford

Position: FAV



Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted along with Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. I am also submitting this testimony in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident and mom-and-pop landlord of **D46**. My mother managed her mother's property as a landlord for decades for the small Chestertown apartment building her family had rented out since the 1920s, and then my wife and I became landlords when we rented out our first rowhome on Fleet Street in Baltimore. **I am testifying in support of SB0651.**

SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, SB0651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

**John Preston Ford**  
529 S East Ave, Baltimore, MD 21224

# **SB 651 - MD Center on Economic Policy\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kali Schumitz

Position: FAV

FEBRUARY 18, 2025

# Local Governments Should Have the Authority to Pass Protections for Renters

## Position Statement Supporting Senate Bill 651

*Given before the Judicial Proceedings Committee*

People should not be forced out of their homes through no fault of their own, but Maryland law currently allows landlords to evict tenants or not renew a lease without providing a basic reason. **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports Senate Bill 651 because we feel that housing is a basic human right and landlords should be allowed to unjustly elect to not renew a tenant lease.**

HB 709 is enabling legislation that would give authority to Maryland counties to establish “just cause” or “good cause” limitations on lease non-renewals. That means local policymakers would be able to determine the kind of “just cause” policy that their locality needs, whether by type of building, for certain populations, or under certain circumstances such as a state of emergency. The bill has been previously introduced and has been significantly negotiated with stakeholders to define and expand the list of what constitutes a “good cause” and to exempt owners of five or fewer units.

Maryland is currently a “no cause” state – that is, a landlord can decide not to renew a lease without any stated cause. This means that working families and their children face the constant threat of displacement, even when they follow all the rules. They are under constant pressure to stay quiet and accept declining conditions, arbitrary policies, and increasing rents just to stay in their communities and keep their children in their local school. Or, they can speak up – on their own or as a group – and face a likely “non-renewal” at the end of their lease and displacement from their community.

Without this enabling bill, counties are preempted from enacting legal protections for Maryland families who face increasingly unstable housing and fears of retaliation and displacement. Giving local policymakers this authority will align the state with best practices from around the country and seek to put limits on “no cause” decisions by landlords. Without HB 709, local efforts are stymied by legal concerns around preemption. Based on available research, Maryland is one of only six states in the country that preempts localities from enacting just cause eviction policies. Other states at least allow localities to pass their own just cause eviction laws.

**Maryland has seen a spike in the number of no-cause, evictions known as “tenant holding over” evictions– a 117% increase in average tenant holding over complaint filings each month since 2020.** This mirrors a national trend in which “[n]early half of U.S. renter households reported experiencing significant pressure to move during the previous six months.”<sup>i</sup> In addition to increasing rents and fewer market options, Maryland families face the specter of non-renewal and displacement now more than ever.

"Good cause" addresses this uncertainty by providing that a landlord must disclose the reason for choosing not to renew. HB 709 provides a list of options for what "good cause," as adopted by a county, may include, such as substantial lease violations, illegal activities, removal of the property from the market, or personal use of the property by the owner. Requiring landlords to disclose the reason for a lease non-renewal helps ensure that no eviction takes place under a cover that can hide discriminatory intent. HB 709's list reflects the policies other U.S. jurisdictions that have enacted. To be clear, this is a list that localities are free to adopt or change to meet local housing needs.

- Since 2008, just cause eviction legislation has been introduced eight times – including multiple statewide bills, as well as bills specific to Prince George's County and Montgomery County. During the COVID-19 state of emergency, Howard County unsuccessfully attempted to prohibit lease non-renewals while Baltimore City passed a short-term provision to require just cause for lease non-renewals until 6 months after the state of emergency's end. These efforts demonstrate a sustained desire in Maryland localities for just cause policies.
- Other states and jurisdictions have longstanding just cause policies, including Washington, D.C. (since 1985), Philadelphia (since 2018), and New Jersey (since 1974). Evidence from other areas demonstrates that the policy has significant benefits for families and does not impede development. A 2019 Princeton/Eviction Lab study looking at four California localities found that "just cause eviction ordinances have a significant and noticeable effect on eviction and eviction filing rates. Given the budget limitations of many states and municipalities to fund other solutions to the eviction crisis, passage of just cause eviction ordinances appears to be a relatively low-cost, effective policy solution<sup>ii</sup>.

HB 709 recognizes that local governments want to assist renting families with stable housing so that they are able contribute long-term to the workforce and the local economy. Requiring that a landlord state a legitimate reason for an eviction through lease non-renewal eviction boosts the stability of families, neighborhoods, and communities. HB 709 ensures local governments can pass enforceable laws whereby no one is arbitrarily deprived of their housing. For these reasons, **the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests the Judicial Proceedings Committee to make a favorable report on Senate Bill 651.**

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## Equity Impact Analysis: Senate Bill 651

### *Bill Summary*

HB 709 is enabling legislation that would give clear legislating power to Maryland counties to establish "just cause" or "good cause" limitations on lease non-renewals. This bill expressly allows local policymakers to determine the kind of "good cause" policy their locality needs within the standards set out in the bill.

### *Background*

When it comes to lease non-renewals, Maryland is currently a "no cause" state – that is, a landlord can decide to non-renew without any stated cause. This means that working people and their children face the constant threat of displacement, even when they follow all the rules. They are under constant pressure to accept declining conditions and increasing rents just to stay in their communities.

HB 709 enables Maryland counties to pass local "just cause" laws that limit lease non-renewals. "Good cause" means that a landlord may choose not to renew an expiring lease only if there is an acceptable basis for that

decision. HB 709 defines “just cause,” including an inclusive but non-exhaustive list of acceptable bases – such as substantial lease violations, illegal activities, removal of the property from the market, or personal use of the property by the owner. HB 709’s list reflects the policies other U.S. jurisdictions that have enacted just cause policy.

### *Equity Implications*

Maryland has seen a spike in the number of no-cause, evictions known as “tenant holding over” evictions– a 117% increase in average Tenant Holding Over complaint filings each month since 2020. This mirrors a national trend in which “[n]early half of U.S. renter households reported experiencing significant pressure to move during the previous 6 months.”<sup>iii</sup> In addition to increasing rents and fewer market options, Maryland families face the specter of non-renewal and displacement now more than ever.

Since 2008, just cause eviction legislation has been introduced in eight times – including multiple statewide bills, as well as bills specific to Prince George’s County and Montgomery County. During the COVID-19 state of emergency, Howard County unsuccessfully attempted to prohibit lease non-renewals while Baltimore City passed a short-term provision to require just cause for lease non-renewals until six months after the state of emergency’s end. These efforts demonstrate a sustained desire in Maryland localities for just cause policies. People of color and single households are more likely to be renters in Maryland, thus any legislation that improves a renter’s situation will benefit them.

### *Impact*

Senate Bill 651 will likely **improve racial, gender, and economic equity** in Maryland.

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<sup>i</sup> HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, “Pressure to Move and Forced Moves Among U.S. Renter Households: Findings From New Questions in the Household Pulse Survey” (Sept. 19, 2023) (based on June-Aug. 2023 data).

<sup>ii</sup> Princeton University Effects of Just Cause Eviction Ordinances on Eviction in Four California Cities. <https://jpia.princeton.edu/news/effect-just-cause-eviction-ordinances-eviction-four-california-cities>

<sup>iii</sup> HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, “Pressure to Move and Forced Moves Among U.S. Renter Households: Findings From New Questions in the Household Pulse Survey” (Sept. 19, 2023) (based on June-Aug. 2023 data).

# **NASW Maryland - 2025 SB 651 FAV - Good Cause Evict**

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV

**Testimony Before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
February 18, 2025**

**Senate Bill 651  
Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies –  
Local Good Cause Termination  
(Good Cause Eviction)**

**\*\*SUPPORT\*\***

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), we would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 651 Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).

As social workers, we believe that housing is a human right. We serve many tenants throughout Maryland who experience great harm when they are evicted without cause. Sometimes corporate landlords refuse to renew a lease because tenants have complained about hazardous conditions, or because the landlord is discriminating against tenants based on their disability, race, or sexual orientation. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families lose their homes, their belongings, and often their support networks, schools, and communities. **Five thousand Marylanders are made homeless by evictions every year.**

We support this bill because it gives local governments the opportunity to enact legislation that will require landlords to provide a legitimate reason for filing for eviction. This would result in fewer discriminatory and exploitive evictions and would hold landlords accountable for actions that greatly impact tenants' lives.

This enabling legislation would provide a no-cost way to strengthen communities, prevent homelessness, and hold corporate landlords to account. Eight states and over twenty-three localities have already passed similar laws. Maryland is one of only five states that prohibits counties from enacting Good Cause Eviction legislation.

This bill would not prohibit landlords from evicting tenants for good cause, including failure to pay rent, causing damage to the property, or other substantial breaches of the lease. The bill does not apply to small landlords who rent five units or fewer.

It is time for Maryland to stand with hard-working Marylanders who deserve safe and stable homes in which to raise their families.

For these reasons, we ask that you give a favorable report on Senate Bill 651.

Respectfully,

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW  
Executive Director, NASW-MD

# **Testimony in Support of HB0709 SB0651\_Blaha\_SURJ.p**

Uploaded by: Katherine Blaha

Position: FAV



Friday, February 14, 2025



## Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee and the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of Baltimore City. I am testifying in **support** of **HB0709 / SB0651**.

HB0709/SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

All Marylanders, regardless of race, class, or zip code, deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes. Renters do not report hazardous conditions and therefore endure unsafe housing out of fear of eviction. As a result of this housing instability and lack of protection for renters' rights, whole neighborhoods suffer.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they choose to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or based on race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction-enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a legally valid reason.

Washington, DC and eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of *only five states* that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

More than 30,000 Marylanders are currently experiencing homelessness. As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing legislation enabling local Good Cause Eviction laws would save state money on support programs by providing a no-cost way to prevent more homelessness and housing instability, strengthen our communities, and keep corporate landlords in adherence with fair housing law and standards.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, HB0709/SB0651**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Katherine Blaha  
5706 Cross Country Blvd  
Baltimore, MD 21209  
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore

# **SB0651 Good Cause Eviction.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Katherine Grasso

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of District 43A. **I am testifying in support of SB0651.**

SB0651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws. As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, SB0651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine Grasso  
2507 N. Howard St., Apt 415  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

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<sup>1</sup>

[https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbro.evictions.fallout.sf2015\\_2.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbro.evictions.fallout.sf2015_2.pdf)

# **SB651\_FAV\_LongBranchHousing ActionTeam.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kathy Porter

Position: FAV

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: Kathy Porter, on behalf of the Long Branch Housing Action Team

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Kathy Porter with the Long Branch Housing Action Team, which is working in coalition with other organizations as Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).

The Long Branch neighborhood of Silver Spring and Takoma Park in Montgomery County is a very diverse neighborhood with tenants and homeowners, families of all income levels, people of many races and ethnicities, and several languages spoken. About half of our neighbors are renters and many of them are immigrants.

Much of our housing stock is older and some rental units have consistent problems with conditions in violation of the housing code. Yet, many tenants are afraid to complain about housing code violations because they fear they will be evicted. Those who are immigrants are especially fearful of speaking out. One tenant, whose son suffered from asthma, lived with mold in her apartment for months. Her landlord's solution was to paint over the mold, which only temporarily covered up the issue and did not address the underlying problem. Yet, because she feared being evicted, she was afraid to press him too hard to correct the problem.

Current law, which allows tenants to defend themselves against eviction if they can prove the eviction is retaliatory, is not adequate to protect most of our tenants. One tenant, who did speak up about conditions in her building, is now fighting in court an eviction order that was clearly retaliatory. While she knows her rights, has obtained legal counsel and has the job flexibility to attend multiple court appearances, most of her neighbors do not. Some of her neighbors who worked with her to improve conditions in her building have accepted clearly retaliatory evictions. They may have been threatened, they may fear not being able to get a good reference from the landlord, or their experience may be that low-income tenants, like themselves, cannot win in the courts against landlords. This is why just giving them legal means to fight a retaliatory eviction is not enough to protect them; these evictions need to be prevented in the first place.

SB651 does not impose an undue burden on landlords. It provides many causes that would allow a landlord to evict a tenant, including actions by the tenant that damage the property, violate the lease, disturb other tenants, or make it difficult for the landlord to manage the property, among other reasons. It also allows landlords to evict tenants if the landlord decides to do major renovations, live in the property himself, or just remove it from the rental market. Small landlords – those who own fewer than six rental housing units – are exempt from the law.

It is indefensible that a state like Maryland, which enjoys great diversity in its population and is

committed to fairness and equality for all, is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing good cause eviction laws. SB651 would only allow local jurisdictions to pass good cause laws; each county could decide for itself if such laws were appropriate for that county.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that good cause eviction has no impact on new housing development.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local good cause eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

# **SB0651\_FAV\_Maryland Just Power Alliance.pdf**

Uploaded by: Katie Wenger

Position: FAV





## Support Good Cause Eviction (SB0651)

Dear Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

We are the [Maryland Just Power Alliance](#), a coalition of 3 non-partisan community power organizations: [Anne Arundel Connecting Together](#) (ACT), [Action in Montgomery](#) (AIM), and [People Acting Together in Howard](#) (PATH), representing tens of thousands of Maryland residents. We organize with people in congregations, schools, and neighborhoods to build power for policies that make our communities more fair and livable for everyone. We are asking you to support Good Cause Eviction (SB0651) when it is considered by the Judicial Proceedings Committee.

We are counting on you to pass Good Cause Eviction this year. Several of our community leaders have been threatened with retaliatory eviction at the end of their leases because of their advocacy in tenants' associations. Further, many apartment complexes in our communities have only month-to-month leases, meaning that tenants can be evicted on any given month for no valid reason. We need Good Cause to protect tenants from being evicted at the end of their lease for organizing, complaining about conditions, or other invalid reasons.

We know that to have communities that are affordable for all we need: strong housing supply, subsidy to create below market rate units, and stability for renters in their homes. New research indicates that legal protections for tenants do not negatively impact development and new constructions.

Jeremy Schwartz, PhD, Professor and Economics Department Chair at Loyola University Maryland has conducted an analysis that finds no evidence that the introduction of Good Cause Eviction Protections in California, Oregon, and New Hampshire resulted in a decline of new construction.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, research has found Good Causes Eviction Protections lead to a statistically significant decrease in evictions<sup>2</sup> and a decrease in displacement for renting families.<sup>3</sup>

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Goetz, Edward, Jeremy Schwartz, Kenton Card, and Evan Davis. "Briefing for Members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee". Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota. (2025)

<sup>2</sup> Cuellar, Julieta. "Effect of "just cause" eviction ordinances on eviction in four California cities." Journal of Public & International Affairs 30 (2019).

<sup>3</sup> Hwang, Jackelyn, Iris Zhang, Jae Sik Jeon, Karen Chapple, Julia Greenberg, and Bina Shrimali. "Who Benefits from Tenant Protections? The Effects of Rent Stabilization and Just Cause for Evictions on Residential Mobility in the Bay Area." In PAA 2022 Annual Meeting. PAA, 2022.  
<https://paa.confex.com/paa/2022/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/26417>

# **SB651 Good Cause Evictions Testimony FAV .pdf**

Uploaded by: Kelli Rives

Position: FAV



**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings  
**Testimony:** SB 651-Landlord and Tenant-Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies-Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)  
**Organization:** Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County, MD  
**Submitting:** Kelli Rives  
**Position:** FAVORABLE  
**Hearing Date:** February 18, 2025

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County is submitting this testimony in favor of SB 651 which will enable counties to adopt provisions to prohibit certain landlords from terminating or failing to renew leases without good cause.

Our Jewish values oblige us to work to create a fair and just society. Currently, a landlord has free reign to fail to renew a lease or evict a tenant during a holdover tenancy for any reason, or for no reason at all. Good cause eviction would allow tenants to stay in their homes without fear of being evicted or having their lease terminated for frivolous reasons or because they organize against unscrupulous landlords or complain about conditions.

We believe that everyone is entitled to a safe and stable place to live. This law allows tenants the security of knowing that they will not be arbitrarily evicted. Keeping families in their homes makes them more likely to engage with their communities since they know they will be able to stay. In addition, Landlords benefit from having reliable long term residents.

Stability is crucial for all families, but particularly those with children so that they have access to consistent education and healthcare and live without fear of having to move on the whim of an unjust landlord. This bill would alleviate the fear while still allowing landlords the ability to evict a tenant for legitimate reasons. This should not have any adverse impact on the supply of rental housing, as any reputable landlord will be comfortable limiting eviction of tenants to those for whom they have good cause.

We urge the Committee to give a favorable report.

## **2\_14 – Senate judicial proceedings committee.docx.**

Uploaded by: Kenton Card

Position: FAV

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

## **Re: Support for SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

14 February 2025

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present today on safe, fair, affordable housing, and related tenant protections in Maryland. The housing affordability crisis continues to put renters at risk in Maryland and around the country. We commend the work of this committee to address this important topic. Though committees like this one in Maryland are bringing together citizens, industry, and experts to grapple with solutions, the problem continues to get worse.

Corporate landlords have purchased larger shares of rental units and engaged in price gouging to benefit their shareholders. In December, the White House [Council of Economic Advisors](#) (CEA) noted how such actors use artificial intelligence to set prices; an anticompetitive behavior that constitutes price-fixing. CEA estimated that this cost renters \$3.8 billion in 2023, or an average of \$70 monthly per renter. Additionally, the Department of Justice [filed a lawsuit](#) against RealPage for its software and monopoly activity in the rental market. Anticompetitive market behavior and price gouging put additional strain on the most vulnerable renters, heightening the risk of eviction, homelessness, and other negative mental and physical health outcomes.

### **The good news: we have proven policy tools to protect tenants, such as Good Cause Eviction Protections.**

*Good Cause Eviction Protections* maintain renters' stability in their homes by protecting them from wrongful and retaliatory evictions. For example, with Good Cause protections, tenants could not be evicted for reporting inadequate housing conditions or requesting basic repairs. While some critics claim that Good Cause can stifle new construction, no published evidence exists in the scientific community to support this claim. To the contrary:

**Our scientific team has conducted what we believe to be the first analysis of the impact of Good Cause Eviction Protections on development. The analysis finds no evidence that the introduction of Good Cause Eviction Protections in California, Oregon, and New Hampshire resulted in a decline of new construction** (see Scientific Appendix and Figures 1-2). Additionally, preexisting research has found Good Causes Eviction Protections lead to a

**Driven to Discover<sup>SM</sup>**

statistically significant *decrease in evictions* ([Cuellar 2019](#), see Figure 3) and *decrease in displacement* ([Hwang et al. 2022](#)).

Elected leaders from around the country – from the White House, to the Governor of California, and the New York Statehouse – have *advocated for and passed* new protections for tenants.

“To prevent evictions, renters should have access to **just- or good-cause eviction** protections that require a justified cause to evict a tenant.”

—[White House Blueprint for a Renters Bill of Rights](#)

“I asked the Legislature to send me a **strong renter protection** package. Today, they sent me the strongest package in America. These **anti-gouging** and **eviction protections** will help families afford to keep a roof over their heads, and they will provide California with important new tools to combat our state’s broader housing and affordability crisis.”

—[California Governor Gavin Newsom, on AB 1482](#)

“There’s very strong political will for [Good Cause Eviction Protections], very strong support for it ... Albany, Newburgh, Kingston, ... all of these localities outside of New York City that are facing the same problems with **rent, price gouging** of tenants and **tenants having virtually no protections** at all, from an eviction without “good cause.”

—[New York State Senator Julia Salazar on “Good Cause” in New York Budget](#)

In 2024, [President Biden](#) called on Congress to address the affordability crisis to “**cap rent increases** on existing units at 5% or risk losing current valuable federal tax breaks.”

Economists have found that rent controls can directly *reduce rent prices by 4-6%* and *do not reduce the supply of housing units* ([Jofre-Monseny et al. 2023](#)).

We have attached a scientific report to inform **our position in support of SB 651**. We recommend that the committee advance tenant protections to prevent worsening of the rental, homelessness, and health crises.

**Sincerely,**

Kenton Card, PhD, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota

Edward Goetz, PhD, Professor and Director of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota

Jeremy Schwartz, PhD, Professor, Economics Department Chair, Loyola University Maryland

Evan Davis, PhD Candidate, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota

***Endorsed by:***

1. Kathryn Howell, PhD, Director of the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education, Associate Professor of Planning, University of Maryland

2. Willow S. Lung Amam, PhD, Associate Professor of Planning, University of Maryland
3. Clara E Irazábal Zurita, PhD, Professor of Planning, University of Maryland
4. Amanda Huron, PhD, Professor, Interdisciplinary Social Sciences and Political Science, University of the District of Columbia
5. Benjamin Teresa, PhD, Professor of Planning, Virginia Commonwealth University
6. Josh Ryan-Collins, PhD, Professor in Economics and Finance, Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, The Bartlett, University College London
7. Mariona Segu, PhD, Assistant Professor of Economics, CY Cergy Paris Université, France
8. Montserrat Pareja Eastaway, PhD, Co-director of the Barcelona Housing Chair, University of Barcelona
9. Karen Chapple, PhD, Professor Emerita of Planning, University of California, Berkeley
10. Justin Steil, PhD, Associate Professor of Planning, MIT
11. Akira Drake Rodriguez, PhD, Assistant Professor of Planning, University of Pennsylvania
12. Mark Paul, PhD, Assistant Professor, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University
13. Rachel G. Bratt, PhD, Professor Emerita of Urban Policy, Tufts University
14. Loretta Lees, PhD, Professor and Director of the Initiative on Cities, Boston University
15. Gianpaolo Baiocchi, PhD, Professor and Director of Urban Democracy Lab, New York University
16. Tom Slater, Professor of Urban Planning of Urban Policy, Columbia University
17. Manuel Pastor, PhD, Professor of Sociology, University of Southern California
18. James DeFilippis, PhD, Professor of Planning, Rutgers University
19. Eric Seymour, PhD, Assistant Professor of Planning, Rutgers University
20. Samuel Stein, Ph.D, Community Service Society of New York
21. Julian Agyeman PhD, Professor of Planning, Tufts University
22. Rebekah Israel Cross, PhD, Assistant Professor of Public Health Sciences, University of Chicago
23. Chris Tilly, PhD, Professor of Planning, University of California, Los Angeles

24. Prentiss Dantzler, PhD, Associate Professor of Sociology, Housing Justice Lab, University of Toronto
25. Allan David Heskin, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Planning, University of California, Los Angeles
26. Jason Spicer, PhD, Assistant Professor of Public Affairs, Baruch College, City University of New York
27. Jan Breidenbach, PhD, Retired Lecturer of Urban Policy, Occidental College
28. Marques Vestal, PhD, Assistant Professor of Planning, University of California, Los Angeles
29. Timothy P. Weaver, PhD, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Albany
30. Peter Dreier, PhD, Professor of Urban Policy, Occidental College
31. Sai Balakrishnan, PhD, Associate Professor of Planning, University of California, Berkeley
32. Gordon Douglas, PhD, Associate Professor of Planning, San Jose State University
33. Laurie S. Goldman, PhD, Senior Lecturer of Urban Planning, Tufts University
34. Jeff Kruth, M.Arch, Assistant Professor of Architecture, Miami University
35. Andre Comandon, PhD, Research Scientist, University of Southern California
36. Davia C. Downey, PhD, Associate Professor of Public Administration, University of Memphis
37. Olivia Williams, PhD, Madison Area Community Land Trust
38. Tony Damiano, PhD, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota
39. H. Jacob Carlson, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Kean University
40. Taylor Shelton, PhD, Associate Professor of Geosciences, Georgia State University
41. Joseph Pierce, PhD, Professor and Head of Department, Geography and Environment, University of Aberdeen
42. Katie J Wells, PhD, Groundwork Collaborative
43. Nick Graetz, PhD, Professor of Sociology, University of Minnesota
44. Megan E. Hatch, PhD, Associate Professor of Urban Policy and City Management, Cleveland State University



45. Japonica Brown-Saracino, PhD, Professor of Sociology, Boston University
46. Deyanira Nevárez Martínez, PhD, Assistant Professor, Michigan State University
47. Daniel Iwama, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of the Fraser Valley
48. Diane Davis, PhD, Professor of Urban Planning, Harvard University
49. Karen Westmont, PhD, Independent Economist
50. Orwa Switat, PhD, Postdoc in Urban Planning, Harvard University
51. Michael Byrne, PhD, Professor of Political Economy, University College Dublin
52. Andrew Messamore, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Washington
53. Shannon Whittaker, PhD, Center for Innovation in Social Science, Boston University
54. Molly Richard, PhD, Center for Innovation in Social Science, Boston University

## **Scientific Appendix and Sources**

### **Did Good Cause Eviction Laws slow development in California, Oregon and New Hampshire?**

#### **California ([AB 1482](#)) and Oregon ([SB 608](#))**

Analysis of the trends in permitting before and after three states passed Good- or Just-Cause legislation suggests the legislation *did not* lead to a statistically significant decrease in permitting. California and Oregon both passed legislation in 2019 and Figure 1 presents the average permits per 100,000 people (permits per capita) in California and Oregon counties, alongside the average among counties in the surrounding states of Washington, Nevada, Idaho and Arizona. It appears that the upward trend of permits in California and Oregon, and those in the surrounding states, that are present before the passage of Good Cause continue in 2019, after its passage. We test this with a more rigorous statistical method known as a “difference-in-differences” model. This approach tests whether the trends in permitting among counties subject to the passage of the legislation were different from the trends in nearby counties not subject to the legislation, after controlling for other factors including county level GDP, population, unemployment and per capita income. *We find that permits did not decline in California and Oregon counties relative to the changes occurring in surrounding states.* In fact, the data show an increase in permits by 41 per 100,000 residents after the legislation passed relative to the comparison counties, though this result was not statistically significant.

#### **New Hampshire**

Prior to the California and Oregon policies, New Hampshire passed Good Cause legislation in 2015. Figure 2 plots average permits per 100,000 people for New Hampshire counties and counties in the surrounding states of Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont. Prior to the passage of Good Cause, permits were increasing in the counties of New Hampshire and surrounding states. In 2015, permits fell in both New Hampshire and its surrounding states. The difference-in-difference model indicates that the rate of change in New Hampshire was not statistically different from the change in surrounding states. Like the California and Oregon findings, this again suggests that *there is no evidence that Good- or Just- Cause legislation leads to lower rates of development where it is enacted.*

#### **Next Steps**

Research is ongoing on a variety of channels including exploring Good Cause’s impact on types of permits (i.e. multi-family versus single family), evaluating the impact of other states’ passage of Good Cause legislation, examining data at the municipal level, and including additional controls to the statistical model.

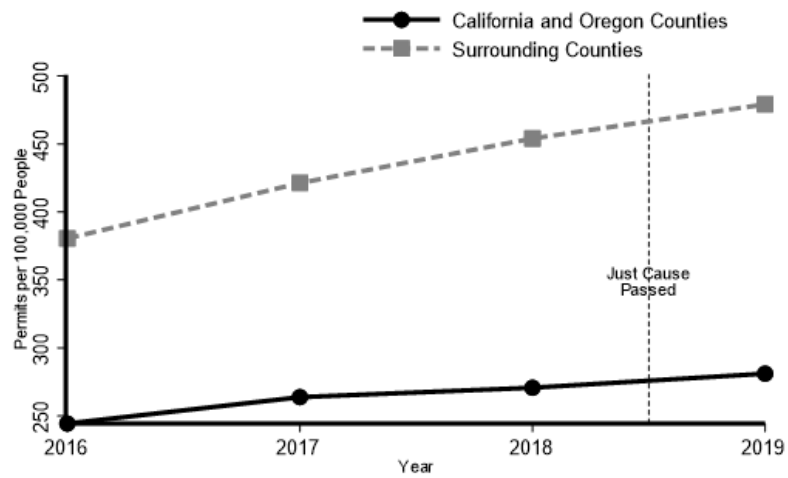


Figure 1: Rate of Construction before & after Good Cause Law Passed in California and Oregon

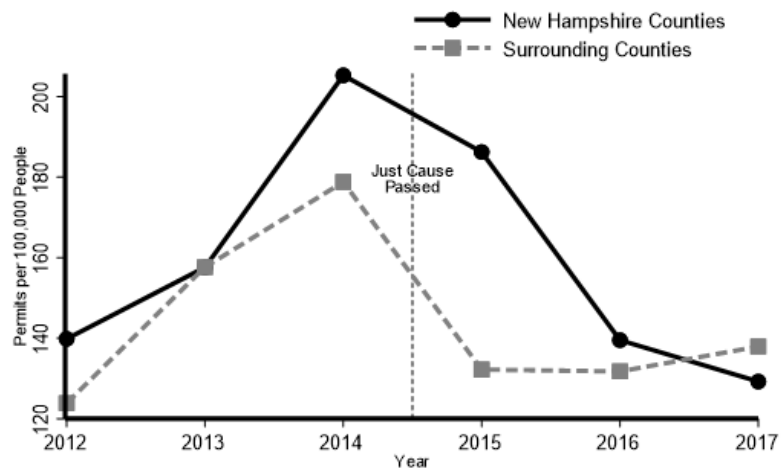


Figure 2: Rate of Construction before & after Good Cause Law Passed in New Hampshire



Figure 3: Rate of Evictions before & after Good Cause Law Passed in California Cities (Cuellar 2019)

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# **SB 651\_Consumer Protection Division\_Favorable\_FINA**

Uploaded by: Kira Wilpone-Welborn

Position: FAV

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*Chief Deputy Attorney General*

**LEONARD J. HOWIE III**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**CARRIE J. WILLIAMS**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY**  
*Chief, Equity, Policy, and Engagement*



**STATE OF MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**ANTHONY G. BROWN**  
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*Division Chief*

**PETER V. BERNIS**  
*General Counsel*

**CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA**  
*Chief Operating Officer*

**KIRA WILPONE-WELBORN**  
*Assistant Attorney General*

February 14, 2025

To: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Kira Wilpone-Welborn, Assistant Attorney General  
Consumer Protection Division

Re: Senate Bill 651 – Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies -  
Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction) (SUPPORT)

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The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports Senate Bill 651 sponsored by Senators C. Anthony Muse and Clarence K. Lam. Presently, pursuant to Real Property Article § 8-402, a landlord can elect to not renew a tenancy for any reason at the end of a residential lease term. Senate Bill 651 seeks to permit local jurisdictions the freedom to adopt local “good cause” policies that would require a landlord to have good cause before electing not to renew a tenancy and displacing the tenant from the rental unit and the community. Senate Bill 651 also requires the Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs to develop uniform forms for landlords to use when electing to not renew a tenancy.

Good cause requirements for lease non-renewal reduce unexpected displacements, providing tenants with security in their residences and communities and allowing tenants to avoid financially expensive disruptions in their living, working, and schooling. As a result, the American Bar Association in its eviction policy guidelines has recognized the importance of good cause in eviction legislation and recommended that all states and localities adopt good cause principals in their residential lease and eviction laws.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal\\_aid\\_indigent\\_defense/sclaid-task-force-on-eviction--housing-stability--and-equity/guidelines-eviction/guideline-9/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_aid_indigent_defense/sclaid-task-force-on-eviction--housing-stability--and-equity/guidelines-eviction/guideline-9/)

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Senate Bill 651 is tailored to permit local jurisdictions the flexibility to adopt housing policies that are beneficial to their residents and communities. For these reasons, the Division requests that the Judicial Proceedings Committee give Senate Bill 651 a favorable report.

cc: The Honorable C. Anthony Muse  
The Honorable Clarence K. Lam  
Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

# **Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony**

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FAV





**Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony**  
**SB651: Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause**  
**Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**  
**February 18, 2025**  
**SUPPORT**

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Chair; The Honorable Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair; and  
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
FROM: Dr. Jeffery Johnson, Chair, Montgomery County Community Action Board

The Montgomery County Community Action Board, the County's local, state, and federally designated anti-poverty group, strongly supports SB651, which would allow counties to establish laws prohibiting landlords from failing to renew leases or terminate holdover tenancies without good cause. Currently, landlords can terminate a tenant or evict a tenant without providing any justification, which leads to housing instability for vulnerable families and potentially allows for inequitable practices among landlords. There is economic benefit to consider when implementing SB651. Fewer evictions mean less strain on local services, including courts and social services, which often bear the costs of homelessness and housing instability.

As advocates for economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities, our board continues to support tenants' rights and policies that remove barriers to safe, affordable housing. In Montgomery County, around 62% of renters earning less than \$50,000 annually spend over half of their income on housing, indicating a severe housing cost burden.<sup>1</sup> Paramedics, custodians, nursing assistants, and firefighters are examples of occupations where individuals cannot afford to live in the county they serve. In order to meet the housing needs of those with an income below 50% of AMI, 4,691 units would need to be built.<sup>2</sup>

The Montgomery County Community Action Agency, of which our board is the governing body, supports households struggling to find stable and affordable housing through the Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Community Action Center and the agency's Navigation Team. Staff support residents in applying for housing vouchers and emergency rental assistance to prevent evictions and assist residents who are at risk for losing their housing for various reasons. Staff report that it is common practice for landlords to simply let a lease expire if a tenant has relied on rental assistance or if the tenant has expressed concerns about health and safety in the building, instead of addressing these issues directly. Marginalized members of our community, including undocumented residents, refugees, asylees, and families with modest incomes, are especially at risk for such unfair practices, which SB651 aims to address.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/countystat/program-inventory/housing.html>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Filling%20the%20Federal%20Affordable%20Housing%20Doughnut%20Hole%20in%20the%20Greater%20DC%20Region.pdf>

It is important to note that protections for tenants are especially critical in an area like Montgomery County, and so many parts of the state, where the cost of living is so high. According to the 2023 Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Standard, a household with two working adults, one preschooler, and one school-age child would need to earn \$122,943 annually to cover their basic necessities, over four times the federal poverty level.<sup>3</sup> Housing represents a significant expense for families. Policies that lead to more housing stability, like Good Cause Eviction protections, can help families move towards the Self-Sufficiency Standard.

The Montgomery County Community Action Board strongly supports SB651 and asks for the Committee's favorable report.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/MDMontCo2023\\_SSS.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/MDMontCo2023_SSS.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> <https://hit.handhousing.org/jurisdictions/montgomery>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Filling%20the%20Federal%20Affordable%20Housing%20Doughnut%20Hole%20in%20the%20Greater%20DC%20Region.pdf>

# **SB651\_MoCo\_Frey\_FAV (GA25).pdf**

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FAV



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550**

**ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270**

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**SB 651**

**DATE: February 18, 2025**

**SPONSOR: Senator Muse**

**ASSIGNED TO: Judicial Proceedings**

**CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey** (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

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### **Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

Senate Bill 651 authorizes a county to adopt by local law or ordinance provisions prohibiting a landlord from failing to renew a lease or from terminating a holdover tenancy without "good cause". Under the bill, good cause exists if: (1) a tenant has committed a substantial breach of the lease or substantial damage to the leased premises or another area of the property and after receiving notice to cure or correct the breach or pay the cost of repair, the tenant fails to comply within a reasonable period of time; (2) a tenant engages in routine disorderly conduct that disturbs the peace and quiet of other tenants; (3) a tenant engages in illegal activity on the leased premises, another area of the property, or on a public right of way abutting the leased premises; (4) a tenant, without reasonable cause, refuses to grant the landlord access to the leased premises for repairs, improvements or inspection of the leased premises; (5) a holdover tenant fails to accept a landlord's offer of a new lease agreement for a term of at least one month but not longer than the terms of the lease agreement effective immediately before the holdover tenancy within one month after the landlord makes the offer or a greater period of time as otherwise established by law; (6) a tenant repeatedly commits minor violations of the lease that disrupt the livability of the leased premises, interfere with the management of the property, or have an adverse financial impact on the property; (7) a tenant habitually fails to pay rent when due, if the tenant has been notified by the landlord in writing that the rent is more than ten days late at least four times in a twelve-month period; (8) a landlord, in good faith, seeks to recover possession of the premises for use by the landlord or a family member; (9) a landlord, after having obtained all necessary permits, seeks to undertake substantial repairs or renovations that cannot be completed while the leased premises are occupied; and (10) a landlord, in good faith, seeks to remove the leased premises from the rental market for at least one year. The bill applies to landlords who, in a county that has enacted a local law or ordinance, owns six or more residential rental units that the landlord owns or controls through one or more legal entities. When terminating a tenancy, a landlord must provide a tenant with notice of the good cause or that the landlord is not subject to local good cause requirements by first class mail within the timeframes specified in the bill. The bill also contains notice provisions that require a landlord to notify a tenant or prospective tenant whether the property is covered under a local good cause eviction law.

Montgomery County strongly support Senate Bill 651, which helps protect tenants and enables them to stay in their homes while also allowing termination of leases for certain causes. Under Montgomery

County law, a landlord must provide 60 days' notice if the landlord does not intend to offer the existing tenant a renewed lease term. If a tenant remains in possession of the leased premises after the expiration of the lease term, the tenant is considered to be "holding over" under current State law. If a tenant holds over, the tenant becomes a month-to-month tenant, but all other terms of the expired lease remain in effect (albeit monthly). A landlord may file a complaint in District Court if a tenant refuses to relinquish possession at the end of the lease term. If the landlord proves proper notice, the lease term fully expires, and the tenant remains in possession of the premises, the Court will issue a judgment for possession in favor of the landlord.

Senate Bill 651 makes significant changes to the tenant holding over process in Montgomery County. A landlord will no longer be able to evict a tenant for holding over, absent an enumerated good cause. Under the bill, a tenant could continue to stay in possession of the property indefinitely after expiration of the lease, as a month-to-month tenant, subject to eviction for good cause if the tenant continues to pay the required rent.

Montgomery County supports Senate Bill 651 and recognizes the importance of providing tenants with housing stability and security through strengthening the protections available to them; good cause eviction requirements are yet another way that Montgomery County can provide housing security to its residents. For the foregoing reasons, Montgomery County respectfully requests a favorable Committee report.

# **SB651\_LindaBergofsky\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Linda Bergofsky

Position: FAV

Date of Hearing: February 18, 2025  
Linda Rae Bergofsky  
Poolesville, MD 20837

**TESTIMONY ON SB651 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Linda Bergofsky

**My name is Linda Bergofsky. I am a resident of District 15. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB651 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

By way of background, I am a member of Oseh Shalom synagogue in Laurel, MD and serve as the chair of its Social Justice committee. I am also an ally of Renters' United Maryland and CASA of Maryland. I am writing in support of this bill because I have seen how evictions can devastate families when corporate landlords and property managers do not have any restraints on bad acts.

If you ever walked or driven down a street and have seen all sorts of items strewn on a sidewalk or curb, you have probably witnessed the aftermath of an eviction. You see clothes, books, furniture, toys, and family pictures dumped unceremoniously; sometimes there are people picking through looking for anything of value. Do you ever wonder about the people behind those items or why they got evicted? Would it surprise you to know that in FY 24, corporate landlords filed eviction cases against 5,104 families in our state without providing a reason.

When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks; and, renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers. As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Enabling Good Cause Eviction laws will not force landlords to renew leases of tenants who have done something wrong under their leases and it will not restrain the development of new rental housing. Nor will this enabling legislation affect local jurisdictions' ability to pass rent stabilization law. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason. **For this reason, I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB651.**

# **SB0651 Good Cause Eviction.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lindsay Keipper

Position: FAV



Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of **District 46, and I am testifying in support of SB0651.**



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, SB0651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Lindsay Keipper**

**2425 Fleet St., Baltimore**

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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<sup>1</sup> [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbro.evictions.fallout.sf2015\\_2.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbro.evictions.fallout.sf2015_2.pdf)

# **CLS Support for SB0651 - Good Cause.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lisa Sarro

Position: FAV

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Karen Zayas



## **SB0651 –Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**Hearing of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
February 18, 2025**

### **Position: Favorable**

Community Legal Services is pleased to submit this testimony in strong support of SB0651.

Community Legal Services (CLS) is a nonprofit legal services organization dedicated to ensuring equitable access to justice and promoting individual, family and community well-being and stability. We provide free legal services in a broad area of legal matters, including eviction prevention legal services. We provide holistic services designed to promote housing and economic stability in our clients' lives, including helping to connect clients with access to alternative housing when necessary.

### **The Need for Good Cause Protections**

Under current Maryland law, landlords are not required to provide a reason when choosing not to renew a lease, even when a tenant has complied with all lease terms and maintained their home responsibly. This legal gap exposes tenants to sudden displacement without warning or justification. It is particularly harmful to low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities who often face insurmountable challenges when forced to move unexpectedly.

Through our work with clients experiencing housing instability, we have seen firsthand the devastating impact that arbitrary lease non-renewals have on tenants, especially tenants with limited financial resources and those who rely on the community around them for their social and financial well-being and stable educational resources for their children. *When individuals and families are forced to relocate, they don't just lose the roof over their heads, they also lose the community surrounding and supporting them.*

## **Impact on Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities**

Seniors and individuals with disabilities face significant challenges when forced to move due to arbitrary lease non-renewals. Many rely on fixed incomes, making it difficult to afford the high costs of relocating, including security deposits, moving expenses, and application fees. The search for accessible housing is often long and arduous, as many rental units lack necessary accommodations such as wheelchair accessibility, grab bars, or elevator access. Additionally, the stress and physical strain of moving can be particularly detrimental to those with mobility limitations or chronic health conditions. Displacement can also sever critical support networks, including caregivers, medical providers, and community services that help maintain independence and well-being. For these vulnerable populations, an unexpected lease non-renewal is not just an inconvenience - it can lead to serious health risks, increased isolation, and, in the worst cases, homelessness.

## **Impact on Housing Voucher Holders**

For tenants using Housing Choice Vouchers and other housing vouchers, the consequences of non-renewal are also particularly severe. Voucher holders already face limited housing options due to source-of-income discrimination (unlawful, but still unfortunately a factor) and a highly competitive rental market. When forced to move due to a landlord's unilateral decision not to renew a lease, voucher holders face several hardships:

1. **High Moving Costs:** Relocating involves significant expenses, including security deposits, first month's rent, moving fees, and application costs. For families living on fixed incomes, these costs can be financially crippling.
2. **Disruptions to Employment and Education:** Forced moves frequently result in job loss or reduced work hours, as tenants struggle to navigate the logistics of relocation. For children, changing schools can cause academic setbacks, social instability, and emotional distress.
3. **Increased Risk of Homelessness:** The time-limited nature of Housing Choice Vouchers means that if a tenant cannot secure a new rental within a specific window, they risk losing their voucher entirely. In many cases, this results in homelessness or extended stays in substandard housing.

## **A Balanced Approach to Housing Stability**

SB0651 is enabling legislation. **It does not impose a requirement that all jurisdictions adopt good cause requirements for nonrenewal of leases.** Instead, it grants local jurisdictions the authority to adopt good cause protections if they determine it necessary and in the best interests of the residents of their community. This approach allows for local

flexibility. It simply puts an additional tool in the pocket of local jurisdictions that can be used – if they choose - to promote and preserve economic and housing stability in their communities.

Even if a county adopts the provisions of SB0651, landlords in that county would not be prohibited from terminating leases when there is a valid reason, such as non-payment of rent, lease violations, or plans to remove a unit from the rental market. It simply ensures that tenants who comply with their lease terms are not displaced without cause. This balance protects responsible landlords while preventing unnecessary evictions that disrupt lives and communities.

## **Conclusion**

Stable housing is the foundation of economic security, educational success, and community well-being. SB0651 is a critical step toward ensuring that Maryland individuals and families are not unfairly displaced due to arbitrary lease non-renewals. CLS urges the committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on this bill to support efforts to provide housing stability for Maryland's most vulnerable residents.

Please feel free to contact Jessica Quincosa, Executive Director, and Lisa Sarro, Director of Litigation and Advocacy, with any questions at [quincosa@clspgc.org](mailto:quincosa@clspgc.org) and [sarro@clspgc.org](mailto:sarro@clspgc.org), respectively.

# **SB651\_FAV\_Cabrera Holtz.pdf**

Uploaded by: Liz Cabrera Holtz

Position: FAV

**SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**Position: Favorable**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Liz Cabrera Holtz

Date: February 14, 2025

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Liz Cabrera Holtz. This testimony is in support of **SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**. As a lifelong Maryland resident, I care about protecting residents' rights to stay in their homes.

I was shocked to learn that corporate landlords can evict tenants without good reason, leaving many Marylanders struggling with housing instability. SB651 would allow local jurisdictions to pass good cause laws, which simply require corporate landlords to be transparent and accountable for why they choose to evict a tenant.

Housing stability is critical to building a safe and just Maryland. Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

# **SB 651 Good Cause Eviction.pdf**

Uploaded by: Loraine Arikat

Position: FAV





SB 651

Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause  
Termination (**Good Cause Eviction**)

**Position:** Favorable

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation, with 10,000 members in Maryland and Washington, DC. We are also a part of Renters United Maryland. 1199 SEIU supports **SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

1199 SEIU supports SB 442 because we believe housing justice is key to health justice. Evictions are not just a symptom of poverty; evictions cause poverty and homelessness. This legislation will simply ensure tenants have the opportunity to exercise their right without fear of relation or discrimination. Removing tenants without needing to provide reason makes vulnerable tenants powerless amidst housing instability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Sincerely,  
Ricarra Jones

1199SEIU

# **Good Cause SB651 February 18.pdf**

Uploaded by: Louise Weissman

Position: FAV

Date of Hearing: February 18, 2025

Louise Weissman

Greenbelt, MD 20770

**TESTIMONY ON SB#651**  
**POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Louise Weissman

My name is Louise Weissman. I am a resident of D22. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB651: the Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover bill. I believe the legislation is a critical step toward ensuring that tenants are given adequate notice about their impending eviction, including a reasonable period of time to gather their personal possessions if the eviction were to be executed.

I am a 72 year old retiree, and a tenant in a Greenbelt, MD apartment complex in Prince George's County. I am aware I am in a better position than a good number of tenants that live in my area, especially Black and Brown families. I receive Social Security and a small pension. I also have some retirement savings. Still, my monthly income requires me to have a cosigner for my lease. Maryland's tenant laws aim to support landlords, not tenants. In these times of uncertainty and with the prospects that Social Security and Medicare will be reduced, if not eliminated, I worry.

The Mishnah (written record of Jewish oral law) and the Talmud (commentary about those laws) provide guidance about the relationship between landlords and tenants. Jewish tradition and law teaches that everyone deserves a safe and stable home, regardless of race or income. They emphasize the importance of fairness, safety, and stability for tenants as well as landlords. They teach us that housing is more than a roof over one's head. When an individual or family is denied safe housing, they lose their dignity. Evictions rob families for generations to come.

Landlords in Maryland can evict a tenant for no good reason. Instead of having the opportunity to put down roots in their communities, tenants face housing instability. More than 5,000 evictions are filed each year without providing a reason for the eviction. More than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. Curbing the number of evictions needs to be a priority.

Evictions create fear and weaken the ability of tenants to hold landlords and property managers accountable. SB651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination. SB651 includes an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws. This law would require accountability from corporate landlords who want to evict a tenant. **Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – that gives counties an opportunity to pass good cause within the framework of the county's housing needs and development plans.** Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB651.

# **SB0651 Written Testimony .pdf**

Uploaded by: Lynn Mortoro

Position: FAV

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0651**

### **Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

#### **FAVORABLE**

**TO:** Chair William C. Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Senator Jeff Waldstreicher and all members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

**FROM:** Lynn R. Mortoro, citizen of Maryland

**DATE:** February 18, 2025

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of this bill.

I have been a citizen of Maryland for 8 years. I have had experience with several groups serving the homeless and low income people. We desperately need protections for this group of people. We need to be their voice.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

I strongly urge a FAVORABLE report on this bill.  
Thank you

# **SB651\_MaraGreengrass\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mara Greengrass

Position: FAV

February 18, 2024

Mara R. Greengrass  
Rockville, MD 20852

**TESTIMONY ON SB651 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Mara Greengrass

**My name is Mara Greengrass. I'm a resident of District 18 and I'm submitting this testimony in support of Good Cause Eviction.**

As a Montgomery County resident for 25 years, a member of Congregation Beth El, and a neighbor who cares, I urge you to pass this enabling legislation. Let individual counties pass their own laws to fit local needs! The Montgomery County Council has already expressed interest in passing such legislation and should be allowed to do so.

Housing stability is a vital part of Jewish law and values and providing stable housing is one of the most important things for a community to do. The great 12th century scholar Maimonides specifically noted in the Mishneh Torah that landlords must give sufficient warning before terminating a lease, to ensure the tenants had time to find new housing.

Landlords should have to provide a valid reason before evicting tenants, such as violation of the lease, destruction of property, non-payment of rent, or illegal activity. In talking to my friends and neighbors, I've found everyone considers this requirement common-sense and entirely reasonable. Often, they tell me they're surprised it's not already possible in Maryland. Landlords should *not* be able to evict tenants due to personal feelings or in retaliation for tenants complaining about rental conditions.

In an uncertain world, it is our duty to try and keep tenants in their homes. It's cheaper for everyone to keep tenants housed than it is to let them be evicted, at which point we have more homeless people to take care of.

Everyone in Maryland deserves the right to stay in their home and the peace of mind that they can't be evicted unless they have done something wrong.

Please support Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation and let each Maryland county decide for themselves if they want to implement it. Help us to help tenants across Maryland. I **respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB651.**



## **Good Cause bill\_Testimony (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Marci Greenstein

Position: FAV

**February 18, 2025**

**Marci Greenstein**

**Bethesda, MD 20817**

**TESTIMONY ON BILL SB651 – Position – FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies –  
Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate  
Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Marci Greenstein

My name is Marci Greenstein. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB651, “Local Good Cause Termination.”**

I am former co-president of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, Maryland, which has over 400 members, many of whom are active in social justice, social services and public policy work both as professionals and volunteers. While I am testifying today solely on my own behalf, I know that my congregation is deeply concerned that our citizens locally and across Maryland are treated fairly with respect to housing. Our Jewish values as well as our ancient texts place a high priority on housing because it protects not just one person or one family, but future generations.

At a meeting of social justice organizations that I recently attended, I was appalled to hear individuals describe how their landlords had failed to renew their leases or issued eviction notices to retaliate against them for complaining about conditions in their buildings needing repair or complaining about violations of local law. Apparently, this is not a new practice. But it was news to me. The power to unfairly remove a tenant or a family without cause, resulting in trauma as well as hardship, is incomprehensible. Clearly, such a practice should be outlawed.

We know that there is much housing insecurity, especially in Montgomery County where housing prices are high. This places even greater power in the hands of

landlords who can refuse to renew a lease capriciously, for no reason at all. Even the fear of losing their lease, which hangs over the heads of renters, denies them their right to safe housing. Enacting this “good cause to evict” enabling legislation is a logical and necessary answer to such overreach. Maryland renters deserve this modicum of protection from unfair treatment.

**I urge this Committee to return a favorable report on SB651.**

# **Testimony Good Cause Evict SB 0651 fav MD Vets KL**

Uploaded by: Matan Zeimer

Position: FAV

Kenneth Lemberg, Silver Spring resident, advocates **favorable support for SB 0651, Good Cause Eviction**

My name is Kenneth Lemberg, I am a Staff Attorney for a small nonprofit legal firm, based in the DC Metro area. I work with Maryland veterans across the state, particularly in the Baltimore area, representing them on housing/homelessness matters, veteran benefits, and related civil issues. Some of my clients have been forced out/evicted of their rental homes/apartments, with at best dubious reasons provided by the landlord. This has resulted in scrambling for new housing and at worst, homelessness, creating substantial, additional stress for these veterans, who may already have other life complicating problems, such as significant disabilities.

Here are some specific examples:

- A client, already very ill, was forced to move out of her long-held apartment because of clutter. The landlord did not seem very willing to help her with this “situation.”
- A client was paid toward the end of the month and needed to negotiate a rent paying arrangement with the landlord. This client was also concerned about upkeep of the rental house by the landlord, expressing that it was insufficient. She was forced to move, with arguably too little notice. She has since been staying indefinitely at a hotel property, with limited funds and several children. She feels she has been discriminated against.
- Yet another client was told that his lease would not be renewed. He had pointed out issues with the infrastructure of the rental house. He is in a transitional situation while he awaits new housing.
- There is the client who was forced to move out, before she could make sufficient arrangements to move out her personal belongings. Again, the reason for eviction appears somewhat unclear.

A fair number of my clients are indigent and may depend on housing vouchers and/or limited public benefits. They may be fully disabled. They should not have to risk homelessness when they are given insufficient and/or no reason at all. They certainly should not be discriminated against or retaliated against for categories such as veteran or voucher status and against speaking up for insufficiently maintained rental housing. Additionally, as in the case of two of my clients, having on the public record that they were evicted makes it more difficult to secure the next rental home/apartment, with background checks on prospective tenants.

In short, Maryland veterans have served their country and deserve the benefits of good cause eviction, as do other state residents. We seek as a society to minimize the dangers of unstable housing. Once again, **I urge favorable support for Good Cause Eviction, Senate Bill 0651.**

Kenneth Lemberg, Esq., Staff Attorney (work bi-monthly at VA Annex Building in Baltimore), resident of Silver Spring, MD

# **SB 651 Good Cause Enabling Public Justice FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matt Hill

Position: FAV



C. Matthew Hill  
Attorney  
Public Justice Center  
201 North Charles Street, Suite 1200  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
410-625-9409, ext. 229  
hillm@publicjustice.org

## **SB 651 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination Provisions**

**Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, Feb. 18, 2025**

**Position: SUPPORT (FAV)**

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**Public Justice Center (PJC) is part of Renters United Maryland and urges you to move favorable on SB 651.** PJC is a nonprofit public interest law firm that assists over 800 renters and their families each year. We stand with tenants to protect and expand their rights to safe, habitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing.

**Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities.** Yet, in FY24, landlords filed 5,104 “no cause” or “tenant holding over” eviction cases – a 62% increase from pre-COVID. SB 651 would address this by allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws and prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a legitimate reason.

**It is important to emphasize that this is local enabling legislation *only* – untying the hands of counties so that they can pass good cause eviction legislation if they want to** and give residents the opportunity to stay rooted in their communities if they are abiding by the lease. If a county chooses to pass good cause, they will then integrate the new law into alignment with other local policies to meet local needs. [Over 41 local elected officials](#) in Maryland want to be empowered to pass good cause eviction. 8 other states<sup>1</sup> – including Colorado and New York in the past year – and 23 counties and cities have passed good cause eviction. **Maryland is only one of 5 states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing good cause eviction.**

**When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks; and, renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction.** The whole neighborhood suffers.

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<sup>1</sup> California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington (and D.C.)

**Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant.** In our experience representing renters in eviction cases for over 30 years, some landlords will non-renew a lease out of a discriminatory motive, i.e., wanting to evict a family who has a voucher or discrimination based on family status (having children), race, disability, or sexual orientation. Tenants can also face eviction as retaliation if they try to organize and demand repairs to dangerous living conditions. **Proving discrimination or retaliation is almost impossible, especially in district court where tenants do not have access to discovery tools like requests for production of documents and depositions.**

**For these reasons and more, the American Bar Association Supports “Just Cause” Eviction Policy.** In 2022, the American Bar Association (ABA) endorsed “just cause eviction” policies as one of [“Ten Guidelines for Residential Eviction Laws.”](#) As reported in the ABA resolution:

When such good cause requirements are absent renters and their families lack basic security of tenure. Forcing a household to relocate imposes significant disruption and potential hardship on the tenant, and should not be allowed without a legitimate reason. Allowing eviction without cause invites abuse, enabling a discriminatory, retaliatory, or otherwise illegitimate motive for ending a tenancy to be easily concealed behind a “no cause” eviction.

American Bar Association, House of Delegates Resolution 612, 9-10.

**Black families bear the brunt of these evictions.** [1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism.](#)

SB 651 is targeted at large corporate landlords who have rigged the system for too long. **The bill explicitly exempts landlords who own 5 or fewer rental units in Maryland.**

[Up to 25% of households who are evicted become homeless.](#) Accordingly, **Good Cause Eviction is a no-cost way for Maryland to prevent more families from becoming homeless at a time in which the federal government is shredding the social safety net.**

Finally, academic researchers looking at other states that have passed good cause have [concluded that Good Cause Eviction legislation keeps families in homes without reducing housing supply.](#)

Public Justice Center is a member of Renters United Maryland, a statewide coalition of renters, organizers, and advocates, and **we urge a favorable report on SB 651.**



# **Testimony in Favor SB651.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matthew Losak

Position: FAV



In Favor  
SB651/HB709

Matt Losak, Executive Director  
[MattLosak@RentersAlliance.org](mailto:MattLosak@RentersAlliance.org)



# MARYLAND MATTERS

## All eyes turn to the Maryland Senate to pass good-cause eviction

By Matt Losak, January 20, 2025

Right now in Maryland, a landlord can evict a tenant who wants to continue to live in an apartment without cause or reason. With just 60 days' notice at the end of a lease term, the landlord does this by simply choosing not to renew the lease.

If a tenant stays one day longer, the landlord can file to evict the tenant for “Tenant Holding Over” (THO). Because the landlord is not required to provide any reason for the THO eviction, burden of defense rests entirely on the tenant. Without smoking gun evidence of landlord malfeasance, discrimination or retaliation – such as documents or witness testimony – it is nearly impossible for tenants to defend themselves, even when there are clear signs of illegal landlord practices.

The ability of landlords to, in effect, evict anyone at any time without justification has an enormous chilling effect on whole communities of renters who live in fear of arbitrary eviction. It gives irresponsible and abusive landlords and property managers power to abuse and silence tenants who press for services and maintenance, file complaints, form tenants associations or otherwise protest misconduct.

To correct this injustice, the House last year passed “Good-Cause” enabling legislation in a historic 96-37 vote. Good-cause, or “just-cause,” eviction protections require a landlord to give a reasonable justification for not renewing a lease.

The Renters Alliance has pursued good-cause protection for more than 15 years. The effort has steadily gained support from legal, labor, ethnic, political and religious organizations, the Maryland Association of Counties and leading elected officials. Gov. Wes Moore has said just-cause protections are “important,” and his Housing Secretary Jake Day promised full backing to get the bill passed.

Despite that support, the bill did not get a vote last year in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. Chair Will Smith (D-Montgomery) has said he supports the bill, but told a group of desperate renters that he did not have the votes to guarantee committee passage – something many bill watchers disagreed with.

Maryland leads the nation in eviction filings, according to Princeton University’s Eviction Lab. And THO eviction filings are dramatically rising. Maryland’s Legal Aid Bureau said the more than 5,000 THO filings in 2023 represented more than a doubling of such filings since 2019. This represents a growing eviction strategy to circumvent due process with a streamlined court process that targets our most vulnerable residents, especially low-income, working families and seniors on fixed incomes.

THO threats intimidate renters from exercising their rights to stable, quality homes and to being treated with dignity and respect. What the data does not show is how many renters face THO eviction and leave prior to a court hearing they believe they cannot win.

In the past year, the Renters Alliance has dealt directly with scores of tenants threatened with THO eviction. Most are seniors who have become active in their communities. Soon after a senior renter and his wife complained repeatedly about garbage not being collected, they were told their lease would not be renewed, after 15 years.

A senior and a veteran, concerned about deteriorating building conditions and rude, abusive treatment by property staff, worked with us to form a tenants association. He got a notice to vacate and must soon leave his home. Another tenant leader received a notice to vacate or face a 30% rent increase. He was forced to move.

The Renters Alliance managed to save one senior couple when the new property manager admitted that she issued an eviction notice because the owners did not want to pay to exterminate bedbugs plaguing the building – easier to get rid of the tenants than the bugs.

We have fought many similar cases. In some, we've been able to stop or delay eviction, or reach a financial settlement. For others, we sought government enforcement. But in too many instances, authorities throw up their hands because the law allows a landlord to reclaim possession of a rental home without having to provide any justification.

As Maryland, and the nation, come to terms with the relationship of stable homes to community health, welfare and prosperity, enacting legal protections for renters is becoming a clear public policy priority.

The time has come to let local governments enact good-cause eviction protection and eliminate unjust housing instability. Our communities are demanding it, and all eyes are now on the Maryland Senate to make it happen.

# **SB0651\_FAV\_Enterprise\_Bondi\_Feb152025.pdf**

Uploaded by: Melissa Bondi

Position: FAV



**SB 0651**  
**Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies –**  
**Local Good Cause Eviction Termination**

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
February 18, 2025

**Position: Favorable**

submitted via electronic testimony

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Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

I'm writing today on behalf of Enterprise Communities Partners (Enterprise) to express our favorable position for **Senate Bill 0651/House Bill 0709, Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

This bill would benefit tenants and housing owner-operators across Maryland, helping reduce housing discrimination, displacement pressure, and homelessness, and enable a tool being used elsewhere throughout the country with positive results.

**About Enterprise:**

Founded 40 years ago here in Maryland, Enterprise is committed to make home and community places of pride, power and belonging, and platforms for resilience and upward mobility for all. Our impact and investment in Maryland housing and affordability totals more than \$2 billion since 1982, in part via loan financing, equity investments, and grants to nonprofit and mission-minded community organizations. Enterprise's affordable housing production, preservation, and rehabilitation efforts total more than \$1 billion in total portfolio value, including 76 apartment communities and more than 7,500 homes in Maryland.

In addition, we provide technical assistance, partnerships, and a variety of federal, state, and local policy analysis. In all of these connections to communities, Enterprise brings substantial first-hand experience about the pressing need for housing stability among renters in Maryland.

**About the Bill:**

Maryland is a state of renters, with 1 in 3 households renting their homes. Evictions, high housing costs, and limited affordable homes threaten renters' stability statewide. In 2023, 21,500 households were evicted from their homes. Evictions among Maryland renters are widespread, with higher or rising rates

of eviction in Baltimore City, Western Maryland, and the Eastern Shore in the last few years.<sup>1</sup> Homelessness, a result of higher evictions, affected nearly 6,000 families statewide.

Right now, property owners can choose to not renew a tenant's lease for any reason, resulting in 5,100 "no cause" evictions among Marylanders last year. Evictions create a reinforcing, destabilizing cycle for both tenants and property owners – one that we need to disrupt due to the 62 percent increase in "no cause" evictions since 2020.

Enabling local governments to pass good cause eviction laws strengthens fair housing protections for a range of Marylanders and directly addresses commonly reported fair housing violations among Marylanders. Harassment and retaliation were the second and third most reported types of housing discrimination in 2024, according to the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.<sup>2</sup>

Good cause eviction laws keep residents rooted in their communities. As a leader in the Purple Line Corridor Coalition, which spans Montgomery and Prince George's counties, Enterprise supports stronger tenant protections for residents living near Maryland's newest light rail. Enabling local good cause evictions legislation advances stronger legal protections for tenants as an anti-displacement measure in a corridor where 60 percent of households rent and spend 30–50 percent of their household income on their housing costs.<sup>3</sup>

We support having statewide authority for localities to choose good cause eviction laws as part of their overall strategies to pursue tenant stability and anti-displacement efforts. We urge your vote in favor of the legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views. Please contact us if you have any questions through my email, [MBondi@EnterpriseCommunity.org](mailto:MBondi@EnterpriseCommunity.org). We appreciate your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Melissa Bondi  
Senior Director, Mid-Atlantic

Cc: Rev. David Bowers, Vice President and Mid-Atlantic Market Leader

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<sup>1</sup> "Evictions, rising after rent assistance ran out, back near pre-pandemic levels in Maryland," DelMarvaNow.com, captured Feb 14, 2025 at: <https://www.delmarvanow.com/story/news/local/maryland/2023/12/06/marylands-rising-eviction-rate-renews-call-for-tenants-rights/71814753007/>

<sup>2</sup> Maryland Commission on Civil Rights [2024 Annual Report](#)

<sup>3</sup> Purple Line Corridor Coalition's [Housing Action Plan](#)

# **SB 651 MEnglish testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michael English

Position: FAV



SB 651 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good

Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 18, 2025 at 1:00PM

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

Thank you for agree to hear my testimony,

I am writing strongly in favor of a favorable report for this enabling legislation for just cause eviction, and I say this as someone who spends just as much, if not more time advocating for the production of more housing as I do pushing for renter protections.

While I'm speaking only in my personal capacity today, I'm involved with multiple organizations that push to make housing production easier, more predictable, and more affordable, and have written numerous pro housing, urbanist opinion pieces for various publications. I've also been called a developer shill, or something to that effect, enough times in enough meetings about proposed apartment complexes or zoning changes that I've quite literally lost count.

I bring all this up only to say that while there is such a thing as a renter protection that can go "too far" and do more harm than good in the long run by limiting the supply of housing Just cause eviction isn't one of them. I, and most other "YIMBYs" and YIMBY organizations either don't spend much time worrying about the just cause, or actively support it, because it works well in tandem with abundant housing to provide leverage and stability to renters.

I recently wrote about why I, someone who worries about not having enough market rate housing, support the bill in a Greater Greater Washington piece you can see here.

<https://gqwash.org/view/98385/its-time-for-good-cause-eviction-in-maryland>

This law would do nothing to prevent a landlord from not renewing a lease for a tenant that fails to pay, violates the lease, or meets other "just causes" for non renewal, and landlords would still be able to deny renewal if they, for example, wanted to take the home off the rental market altogether. It is not a "lease for life" as some allege.

All it means is this.

"If you are going to continue to rent the home out, the person currently renting it gets the first shot at renting it, unless you have a compelling reason not to offer it to them."

That's unambiguously good. Yes, housing is a market, and market principles apply, but it is also a, well, home, a place that is meant to be a relative constant in our lives that, while it may not last forever, does not change suddenly for no good reason.

That's all we're talking about here.

Development won't crater, and problem tenants won't be forever entrenched in a home. It *will* help prevent tenants being removed for retaliatory reasons, such as forming a tenants union or making consistent maintenance requests, and more generally help to give a little certainty that their safe harbor will stay their safe harbor.

Thank you

Michael English  
8005 13th Street  
Unit 304  
Silver Spring, MD  
20910

# **SB 651 - Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michael Lent

Position: FAV

**SB0651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**Position:** SUPPORT (FAV)

**To:** Judicial Proceedings Committee

**From:** Michael Lent, resident of Parkville, MD

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Michael Lent. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, **I urge this committee to offer a favorable report on SB 651.**

# **Maryland Catholic Conference\_FAVSB651\_.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michelle Zelaya

Position: FAV



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 18, 2025

**SB651**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause  
Termination (Good Cause Eviction)  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 651**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**Senate Bill 651** would authorize counties to pass local laws or ordinances prohibiting landlords from refusing to renew a lease during its term or from ending a holdover tenancy without "good cause." These laws would establish clear requirements and limitations to ensure that tenants are treated fairly and provided with adequate protection against arbitrary or unjust lease terminations. The act is designed to promote housing stability and prevent unfair evictions that can disrupt individuals and families.

The Catholic Church emphasizes the dignity of the human person and the importance of housing as a basic human right. This legislation aligns with the Church's call to uphold the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable by protecting tenants from unjust evictions that disproportionately affect marginalized communities. The principle of the common good is reflected in efforts to ensure that all members of society have access to stable, secure housing, which is essential for individual and family flourishing. Furthermore, the act promotes justice and solidarity by addressing power imbalances between landlords and tenants, advocating for fairness, and fostering compassionate stewardship of resources. Supporting such measures embodies the Church's mission to create a more just and equitable society rooted in love, dignity, and care for all.

**Senate Bill 651** fosters housing security for tenants, particularly vulnerable populations such as low-income families, seniors, and individuals facing systemic inequities. By requiring landlords to provide a valid reason for lease terminations, it reduces the risk of unjust evictions that can lead to homelessness, financial hardship, and community displacement. Stable housing is foundational to healthy, thriving communities and contributes to economic stability by enabling individuals and families to focus on employment, education, and other opportunities without the constant threat of losing their homes.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 651**.

## **SB651**

Uploaded by: Mikkyo McDaniel

Position: FAV



SB651\_Mikkyo McDaniel\_FAV

2/18/2025

Mikkyo McDaniel  
Baltimore, Maryland 21234

**TESTIMONY ON SB651 - POSITION: (FAVORABLE)**  
**Good Cause Eviction**

Commented [1]: This looks great Mikkyo! I have no comments other than the minor typo/copy-paste error!

**TO:** Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment & Transportation

**FROM:** Mikkyo McDaniel

My name is Mikkyo McDaniel, and I am a resident of District 43B in Baltimore, Maryland. I am submitting this testimony in support of Good Cause Eviction SB651.

I am writing to express my strong support for the passage of legislation that would provide Good Cause Eviction protections for tenants across the state of Maryland. With the rising cost of living and the growing housing instability, this bill is essential to ensure fairness, security, and stability for renters, particularly those who are most vulnerable in our communities.

Far too many Marylanders face the threat of eviction without just cause or due process. This leaves families with no stability, often pushing them into homelessness or forcing them to accept living conditions that are substandard, simply out of fear of being displaced. This is a cycle that needs to end, and good cause protections are the key to stopping it.

Having interned in property management, I've seen firsthand how difficult it can be for many tenants to rent each month. From unexpected medical bills to job loss or sudden family crises, life can throw challenges that make paying rent a struggle for hardworking people. These challenges often leave tenants feeling vulnerable to eviction, which is why good cause protections are crucial to ensure families aren't unfairly displaced during tough times.

Evictions are not only traumatic for the individuals and families involved, but they also harm entire communities. The loss of a home, particularly without a legitimate and just reason, disrupts children's education, breaks down social networks, and destabilizes neighborhoods. Many people who are evicted struggle to find new housing, often because they are left with a negative eviction record that disproportionately affects low-income renters and communities of color.

Good cause eviction laws would ensure that tenants are not arbitrarily displaced and that landlords are required to provide valid, legitimate reasons for eviction. These reasons should go beyond arbitrary or retaliatory reasons like a tenant complaining about repairs or reporting a landlord's violation of housing codes. In situations where eviction is necessary, good cause protections help ensure that tenants have time to find new housing or remedy issues before an eviction is finalized, preventing unnecessary disruptions to their lives.

Moreover, these protections would make housing markets more stable and predictable for both tenants and landlords. By maintaining transparency and fairness in eviction practices, good cause eviction laws create an environment where tenants are more likely to fulfill their lease obligations and where landlords can trust that they will be dealing with tenants who are invested in maintaining their homes.

For too long, renters in Maryland have been left vulnerable to unfair practices. Many are already struggling with high rents, a lack of affordable housing, and poor living conditions. We cannot allow these issues to be exacerbated by a legal system that leaves them without recourse when they face eviction without cause.

Passing good cause protection is not just a matter of fairness, it is a matter of human dignity. No family should live in constant fear of losing their home for no legitimate reason. As we move forward with the 2025 session, I urge you to prioritize the well-being of all Maryland residents and pass strong good cause protection.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB651.

# **SB651\_GoodCauseEviction\_FAV\_QV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Molly Finch

Position: FAV

**Bill Title:** Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies -  
Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction) (SB 651, HB 709)

**Position:** SUPPORT (FAV)

**To:** Judicial Proceedings Committee

**Date:** February 18, 2025

Dear Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Molly Finch with Quaker Voice of Maryland, a faith-based advocacy group which advocates for policies that are just, compassionate, equitable, and respectful of the inherent worth of every person and the Earth upon which we live. Quakers across Maryland told our group that Access to Affordable Housing is an important issue to them. This is why I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

My understanding is that the current law in Maryland allows for residential landlords to remove tenants without needing to provide a reason. I also understand that this stops many renters from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing unsafe living conditions, out of fear of retaliation for asking for needed and legally required repairs. Without tenant legal protections, landlords can retaliate against tenants who organize for their rights, demand that repairs be made, or complain about violations of laws about safe housing conditions. Retaliation can take the form of refusing to renew a renter's lease.

The Good Cause Eviction bill would require that landlords who want to cancel a lease must inform tenants of the reason, from a specified list outlined in the bill. Reasons would include not paying rent, engaging in disorderly conduct or breaching the lease agreement, among other issues. It applies to landlords who own six or more residential rentals, so it exempts "mom and pop" landlords. It still allows eviction for tenants damaging property and substantial breach of lease. This bill will help clarify when eviction is warranted, maintain access to safe, healthy housing, and prevent some homelessness.

It is important to note that SB 651 is enabling legislation: it gives local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from large landlords. Right now Maryland explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws. SB 651 would give county residents the ability to pass a good cause bill for their county.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Sincerely,

Molly Finch

*Working Group Member, on behalf of Quaker Voice of Maryland*

*Personal email: [mgsfinch@gmail.com](mailto:mgsfinch@gmail.com)*

*Organization email: [quakervoice.md@gmail.com](mailto:quakervoice.md@gmail.com)*

# **Robinson Chaney SB 651 FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Naima Robinson Chaney

Position: FAV

Testimony on SB 651 Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies –  
Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)  
Hearing of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 18, 2025  
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee

My name is Naima Robinson-Chaney, and I am asking you to pass the Good Cause Eviction bill. I live with my three teenage children in a home that we rent in Baltimore City, at least for now. I have been told by my landlord, a property management company, that my children and I have to leave. Earlier this month they sent me a notice to vacate in the next 60 days without giving me any reason why.

But I know the reason. I finally stood up to them. I was paying my rent timely every month, but they kept saying that I was behind on the rent. When I finally got a ledger of charges and payments from them, I learned that they charged me for an \$800 water bill that I had never seen before as well as a bunch of illegal fees – an administrative fee, excessive late fees, and legal fees. I've begged them to add me to the water bill account so that I can get help from the City's Water For All program. They've refused. I got an attorney to help me fight a failure to pay rent case in court because the landlord was taking my rent money and putting it to the illegal fees. We won the case! And then within 30 days of winning the case, they sent me the 60-day notice to terminate my rental.

Where will we go? The father of my children passed, and we live on a fixed income. I'm losing sleep, my children are losing sleep, and we're all on edge. Where are we going to go? All I want is to sleep somewhere safe and stable. But every time I ask the landlord questions about the fees or the lease, they refuse to respond. Instead, they just send me more harassing notices and add on more fees.

I don't want to move again. I don't want the kids to have to change schools again. I wanted to start my own childcare center, and I'm taking classes to become certified. But if I don't have a safe place to live, how can I become more financially secure?

I support the Good Cause Eviction bill. If this law had been in place, my landlord would have to state **why** – after I paid the rent every month – they want me and my children to have to leave. And the only reason they would be able to give is that I finally stood up to them. Please pass this important legislation.

Thank you

Naima Robinson-Chaney

# **SB 651\_Horizon Foundation\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nikki Highsmith Vernick

Position: FAV



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February 18, 2025

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**BILL:** SB 651 – Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

**POSITION:** Support

The Horizon Foundation is the largest independent health philanthropy in Maryland. We are committed to a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives.

**The Foundation is pleased to support SB 651 – Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).** This bill would authorize Maryland counties to adopt “good cause” measures that would limit landlords’ ability to evict a tenant or not renew their lease without stating a good or just reason for doing so.

Currently, Maryland is a “no cause” state, meaning that a landlord does not have to provide any justification for lease non-renewals. This leaves renters in a vulnerable position and under a constant threat of displacement. Not only does this contribute to housing insecurity in our communities, but it also pressures renters to stay quiet and accept poor living conditions, increasing rents and other arbitrary policies out of fear of retaliation from their landlord and no longer having a place to live.

Good housing and good health are inextricably linked. During the Horizon Foundation’s most recent strategic planning process that involved extensive community engagement, residents cited obtaining safe, affordable and high-quality housing as one of the biggest barriers to their ability to live a healthy and abundant life. This is backed up by an abundance of research: studies show that people who face housing instability are more likely to experience poor mental and physical health outcomes.<sup>i</sup>

No-cause evictions, known as “Tenant Holding Over” evictions, have spiked in Maryland since 2020. SB 651 would allow counties to determine their own “good cause” stipulations that make sense for their communities and can meet local housing needs, while also exempting small “mom and pop” landlords from the bill’s requirements. At the same time, Maryland families would be legally protected from the unchecked power of larger, corporate landlords to evict them from their homes without good cause in an effort to raise rents, avoid upgrading living conditions, discriminate against certain renters and more. In addition, research shows that



enacting good cause eviction provisions does not negatively impact new housing development.

Laws and practices remain in place that hold many of our friends and neighbors back and lead to poorer health outcomes and fewer opportunities for housing stability and overall social mobility. But we believe health is a fundamental right and that everyone deserves a fair opportunity to attain it at the highest level. Housing security is key to achieving this goal. For this reason, the Foundation **SUPPORTS SB 651** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/briefs/housing-and-health-overview-literature>

# **SB0651-JPR-FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



**BRANDON M. SCOTT**  
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations  
88 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

**SB651**

February 18, 2025

**TO:** Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Mayor Brandon M. Scott, City of Baltimore

**RE:** Senate Bill 651 – Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover  
Tenancies - Local Just Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee please be advised that my Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 651.

SB 651 would authorize a jurisdiction to enact a local law that would prohibit a landlord from failing to renew a lease without providing a just cause. The bill only applies to residential properties and provides a range of reasons the landlord can use to provide “just cause” of the non-renewal.

This bill strikes a reasonable balance to ensure that both tenants and landlords have clarity and certainty regarding their lease renewals. It does not mandate that a landlord renew a tenant’s lease rather it requires that a reason (“just cause”) be given to the tenant if the lease is not going to be renewed. The reasons are broad and include breach of lease, failing to cease disorderly conduct, illegal activity, refusing access for repairs, and the inability to complete renovations while the building is occupied. “Just cause” also allows for the landlord in good faith to not renew the rental if they wish to remove the property from the market or want to recover possession of the property for their use or the use of their family.

It is important to note that the bill authorizes rather than mandates local jurisdictions to enact a local just cause law. This allows jurisdictions to make decisions in the best interest of their residents and unique local circumstances. In 2021, the Baltimore City Council attempted to pass local legislation to establish just cause evictions but the legislation could not be approved by the City’s law department for form and legal sufficiency as state law change would be required. SB 651 would make the necessary changes to allow the City to pursue local legislation, should we wish.

For these reasons, the I request a **favorable** report on SB 651.

*Annapolis – phone: 410.269.0207 • fax: 410.269.6785  
Baltimore – phone: 410.396.3497 • fax: 410.396.5136  
<https://mogr.baltimorecity.gov>*

# **SB651 Ramos testimony JPR 2.25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Odette Ramos

Position: FAV



**Odette Ramos**

**Baltimore City Councilwoman**

**District 14**

(410) 396 - 4814

[odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov)

100 N. Holliday Street, Room 506

Baltimore MD 21202

**Testimony**

**SB651: Landlord Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenants – Local Good Cause Termination**

**February 18, 2025**

**FAVORABLE**

Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to urge your support for **SB651 Landlord Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenants – Local Good Cause Termination.**

SB651 will provide jurisdictions with the authority to enact local “Good Cause” eviction ordinances. These laws protect renters from arbitrary and retaliatory lease terminations that destabilize the lives of working people, their children, and their communities.

The Baltimore City Council passed a law in 2021 to prohibit landlords from evicting someone after the end of a lease for 180 days after the end of the State of Emergency, and that only specific causes for eviction were allowed before then. Our law department warned us then that we could be sued because it was not in the Baltimore City Council’s power to make laws regarding landlord/tenant matters. We received additional information that during a state of emergency we may not be sued. However, Baltimore City was the subject of litigation as a result of our actions, and the law was rendered moot before the bill expired on Dec 31, 2021.

Therefore, SB651 is vital. The Baltimore City Council wanted to take significant action to help our renters, and SB651 would give us the authority to do that in holdover cases.

I have a resident now who could really use this law. She has been a good tenant, paid her rent, but when she reported that something needed to be repaired, the landlord gave her the notice to end the lease without any cause for why she would be removed.

I urge your favorable report for this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14

# **Rebecca Clausen SB 651 GCE Testimony FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rebecca Clausen

Position: FAV

Testimony on SB 651 Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover  
Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)  
Hearing of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 18, 2025  
Position: **Favorable**

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members:

My name is Rebecca Clausen. I am a single parent to three teenage daughters; a decorated, 30-year, 100% permanently and totally disabled Medical Service Corps combat veteran; a former senior federal GS employee and Class of 2010 Presidential Management Fellow; and a resident of Anne Arundel County since 2012. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 651. My family has endured severe hardships due to Maryland's toothless tenant protections, which have allowed landlords to retaliate against us and fail to meet their legal obligations without any consequences.

Unlike the vast majority of Marylanders facing eviction, I have been represented by an attorney, which has been critical in navigating the legal system, but it was not enough. It can never be enough because landlords hide behind their silence and wall of privilege and evict families without having to state a legitimate reason. *Good cause eviction flips that script by requiring landlords to show why they want to evict the renter.*

**Hazardous Living Conditions.** This issue is not an issue of poverty or bad tenants, nor is it confined to Baltimore. My family and I are stellar tenants who have faced systemic failures in Maryland's housing laws and judicial system. These failures have left us vulnerable to unsafe living conditions, retaliatory actions, and a lack of accountability for landlords. Since leasing a home in Gambrills, Maryland that is less than one mile from our schools (AMS and AHS) - my family has faced a series of egregious violations by our landlord, SMD Management, LLC (aka SMD Capital Group). These violations have not only jeopardized our safety but have also exposed the systemic failures of Maryland's legal system.

I have reported the hazardous issues below to the landlord and local agencies:

- Repeated flooding with ankle-deep rainwater entering the basement causing extensive mold and damage to our personal possessions.
- Leaking pipes and toilets in the kitchen and bathrooms have caused dangerous water damage and additional, prolific mold growth. This has caused respiratory issues, allergic reactions, and long-term health risks for my family.
- Failure to repair chipping lead paint and provide the mandated lead certificate from the MD Dept. of the Environment.
- Structural defects including rotting floors, holes in the walls, and exposed electrical wiring.
- Severe rodent infestation coming from 2-foot holes in the ceiling.

The Health Department, Housing Protection Services, Md. Dept. of the Environment, mold experts, and pest experts have been to the property and documented these issues. The government agencies have issued multiple violation notices and citations, but have not imposed any of the fines outlined in the citations.

**Retaliation and Lack of Landlord Accountability.** Instead of making the needed repairs, and just 14 days after being cited for dozens of unremediated housing code violations, the landlord issued a notice of lease nonrenewal. We fought the eviction case in court, and my lawyer did the best that she could, but we lost. It's almost impossible to prove that someone else acted out of retaliation, and there is never a so-called "smoking" gun. Landlords are not made to prove anything – and so we lost and my family is facing imminent eviction.

The constant threats of eviction and unsafe living conditions have caused significant emotional distress, anxiety, and sleepless nights for my family. Mental health care is inextricably intertwined with rental health care. Not to mention that it is next to impossible to find a new rental home with an eviction judgment on your rental history. I've applied and applied and been rejected repeatedly because of this eviction judgment. I honestly do not know where we are going to go.

The worst part is that the landlord has ignored the citations from Housing Protection Services and MDE, and refused to fix any of these critical health and safety violations including lead hazards and severe mold growth. So I know that the next renting family in this home is going to endure the same severe threats to their health and safety and the same retaliation and eviction when they try to stand up for themselves.

**The Need for SB 651.** SB 651 is essential to protect tenants like me from retaliatory actions and ensure that landlords are held accountable for maintaining safe and habitable housing. Anti-retaliation laws will never work when the tenant has to prove what the landlord is thinking when they move to evict you. Without good cause eviction, tenants remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, as my family's experience demonstrates.

**Conclusion.** I served my country honorably for 30 years, including combat service. Yet, the very laws and freedoms in Maryland that I stood up to defend have failed my family. My children and I have been forced to endure hazardous living conditions, retaliation, and now eviction because the laws allow landlords to hide. Now, because of this eviction record, landlords are declining our applications to rent another home. As a result, we will become one of the thousands of homeless families in Maryland.

SB 651 represents a vital step toward ensuring that all Maryland residents have access to safe, stable, and equitable housing. I strongly urge the committee to vote in support.

Rebecca Clausen



## **Testimony in support of SB0651 - Landlord and Tena**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB#0651\_Richard Kaplowitz\_FAV

02/18/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#0651 -**  
**FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0651, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

My Jewish faith declares in our Ancient Jewish texts laws about keeping homes safe for the people who live in them. The prophet Micah understood that housing is more than a roof over one's head and that to deny a person safe housing is not only robbing them in the present but also robbing their family for generations to come, "Those who lie in bed at night planning iniquity and designing evil...covet fields, and seize them; houses, and take them away. They defraud a person of their home; a person of their inheritance." (Micah 2: 1-3)

There has been significant progress in recent years to pass much needed housing justice legislation, including Access to Counsel and the Tenant Safety Act, Maryland is an extreme outlier with an eviction rate that far exceeds the national average according to recent research. We know that evictions have far reaching and lasting impacts on individuals, families, and communities and most significantly impact low-income Black and brown communities.

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development reports: <sup>1</sup>

In Maryland, racial disparities persist at both the household and neighborhood level. Just as rent burden, eviction, and foreclosure disproportionately impact Maryland households of color, local distress often disproportionately impacts Maryland neighborhoods of color. A focus on Maryland's most populous city, Baltimore, bears this out.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Just-Communities/Documents/Baseline-Report.pdf>

Landlords often retaliate against tenants who organize for their rights, demand that repairs be made, or complain about violations of laws about safe housing conditions. Oftentimes, this retaliation takes the form of refusing to renew leases. This Good Cause Eviction legislation would protect tenants from this kind of retaliation, and from being evicted for no reason at all. These laws will promote housing stability for tenants, families, and neighborhoods.

This is local enabling legislation, meaning that it would allow local counties to adopt their own good cause laws that meet local needs. With the drastic drop in Federal employment this housing crisis may continue to worsen throughout Maryland requiring this intervention to protect households that are affected by this unemployment crisis.

This bill authorizes 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. This is not a requirement, this bill is a grant of privilege for a county to take this action. It will govern the process by establishing certain requirements and prohibitions for a local law or ordinance adopted in accordance with the Act..

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0651.**

# **Copy of HB0709 - Good Cause Eviction.pdf**

Uploaded by: Robin Jacobs

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee and Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of **District #43A. I am testifying in support of HB 0709 / SB 0651.**



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

HB0709/SB651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, HB0709/SB651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Robin Jacobs**

**418 Fawcett Street**

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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<sup>1</sup> [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbrow.evictions.fallout.sf2015\\_2.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbrow.evictions.fallout.sf2015_2.pdf)

## **Good Cause Eviction .pdf**

Uploaded by: Robyn Richards-Holmes

Position: FAV

**Friday, February 14, 2025**

**Good Cause Eviction (Favorable)**

Good Cause Senate Committee

**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:** Robyn Richards-Holmes

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Robyn Richards-Holmes. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for no good reason and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

This bill is important to me because the current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and prevents tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer

Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has no impact on new housing development.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account. Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on HB 709.

Sincerely,

Robyn Richards-Holmes



# **SB651 - TRAC - Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sam Williamson

Position: FAV



## **FAVORABLE**

### **SB651 – Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

The Trans Rights Advocacy Coalition (TRAC) is a Maryland-based, trans-led group working to ensure that all transgender and gender-expansive Marylanders are empowered to live safe and affirming lives. TRAC has a broad membership, including community members with lived experience, organizers, medical professionals, lawyers, researchers, religious leaders, allies, and more.

TRAC supports SB651, Good Cause Eviction. Transgender and nonbinary individuals face discrimination in many walks of life, and housing is no exception. Despite anti-retaliation laws, it is nearly impossible to hold landlords accountable for discriminating when, under current law, landlords don't need to give any reason at all to no longer offer an existing resident a lease.

The 2022 U.S. Trans Survey found that nearly one-third of transgender individuals have experienced homelessness.<sup>1</sup> We expect to see this number rise. This is an especially destabilizing time for trans people, and the political climate continues to fuel transphobia. Not having a good cause eviction standard in place creates legal pathways for landlords to discriminate against trans people and other vulnerable groups despite Maryland's strong anti-discrimination laws, creating even more instability. By allowing counties to create their own good cause laws, this enabling legislation would help prevent this additional assault on trans peoples' lives

The state of Maryland has been admirable in its defense of its trans residents, both by passing recent protections and standing up to the unprecedented abuses of the current presidential administration, but if trans people cannot stay stably housed in Maryland, they cannot count on these protections either.

If a landlord continues renting a home out, then the person currently renting it should get the first chance to rent it, unless the landlord has a compelling reason not to offer it to them. All people, cisgender and trans, deserve that common sense protection.

We urge a favorable report on SB651.

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<sup>1</sup> Sandy E. James, *et. al*, 2022 U.S. Trans Survey: Early Insights, Report (2024) p.21, [https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/2022%20USTS%20Early%20Insights%20Report_FINAL.pdf).

# **SB 651 Testiomy Final.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Miller

Position: FAV

**SB 651 –Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**  
**Hearing before the Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 18, 2025**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

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Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the federally designated Protection & Advocacy agency in Maryland mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. One of DRM's goals is to end the unnecessary segregation and institutionalization of Marylanders with disabilities. To achieve this goal, DRM's Housing Team works to expand opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities to be part of their communities and to live in affordable and accessible housing. This includes representing persons with disabilities in eviction proceedings to prevent unnecessary homelessness and institutionalization.

DRM is a member of Renters United Maryland which urges you to support SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB 651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing not to renew a lease and evicting a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that local jurisdictions may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

Many of DRM's clients experience lease non-renewals and tenant holding over cases. Some of these individuals live in declining conditions and if they speak out about these conditions, they are at risk of receiving a non-renewal of their lease and displacement. It is both expensive and exceptionally difficult for people with disabilities to move due to their disabilities and related health conditions. This bill would authorize jurisdictions to enact good cause legislation requiring landlords to renew a tenant's lease unless they have *good cause* reason not to renew. It would allow tenants to stay in their units without unnecessary interruption and upheaval due to a

non-renewal of the lease.

Under current law, landlords can remove tenants from their homes at the end of the lease term without cause and without providing a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would empower renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would risk being put out of their homes. This means fewer evictions Marylanders with disabilities as well as Black Maryland residents who are disproportionately impacted by evictions. One in four Black children in a renting household faces the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has no impact on new housing development. In addition, fewer eviction filings would reduce caseloads for district court judges thereby decreasing expenses for the Maryland judiciary.

Moreover, as Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

**For these reasons, DRM urges a favorable report on SB 651.**

Sincerely,

Sara Miller  
Housing Advocate  
Disability Rights Maryland  
1500 Union Ave., Suite 2000  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
[SaraM@disabilityrightsmd.org](mailto:SaraM@disabilityrightsmd.org)  
443-692-2509

# **Senate Testimony of Saul Schniderman.pdf**

Uploaded by: Saul Schniderman

Position: FAV

## **Testimony of Saul Schniderman, on behalf of Community Vision for Takoma SB 651 – Authorizing counties to adopt Good Cause Eviction provisions Support**

Community Vision for Takoma (CVT) is an informal network of Takoma residents and nearby neighbors dedicated to Takoma Park’s progressive legacy and leadership, working to strengthen the transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of local government. We support good-cause eviction legislation and our current rent stabilization law, knowing how helpful they are to the large proportion of Takoma Park residents who are renters. In turn, such legislation supports the stability and resiliency of our whole community. We support new affordable housing that is sustainably developed, respects the diversity of our neighborhoods, and does not lead to the displacement of residents.

Takoma Park is a densely populated municipality (about 2.1 square miles) with an ethnically and economically diverse population of whom almost half (44%) are renters. The majority of residents in Takoma Park are Black, Hispanic, or Asian. Our rent stabilization law -- enacted in 1981 -- has helped preserve affordable housing for tenants and mitigated their displacement by providing a stable place to live. SB 651 -- a common-sense bill requiring landlords to give a reasonable justification for not renewing a lease -- will further assist tenants by providing housing security.

Good cause eviction legislation has broad support in our community and has been supported by our elected officials. In 2024, Takoma Park Mayor Talisha Searcy and all six Takoma Park councilmembers were among 35 county and municipal elected officials who signed a [letter](#) of support for just-cause eviction. As they stated, “it is time for our Maryland laws and policies to uphold the value of stable housing as a fundamental human right.”

Furthermore, the letter stated, “families of color, single-parent families, and immigrant families face these burdens and hardships the most. Currently, wages do not align with the costs of the housing market. When these families cannot renew their leases, they often find themselves stressed trying to find another housing option suitable for them.”

According to research conducted by Edward Goetz (Professor of Urban Planning, University of Minnesota), corporate involvement in rental housing has led to higher evictions, more rapid rent increases and miscellaneous fees, and lower levels of property maintenance. His research also found that good-cause eviction protections do not affect housing development.

Sources: *Census Reporter*, Takoma Park Maryland, 2022; City of Takoma Park website, Facts and Figures; Letter of Support for Just Cause Eviction (House Bill 477) from 35 County and Municipal Elected Officials, 2024; Edward G. Goetz, [Testimony, Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee](#), [PowerPoint slides], 1/21/2025.

# **SB651\_FAV\_Thompson.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shani Thompson

Position: FAV



← MAKE A COPY SB651\_FAV\_YO...



**PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND**

P.O. Box 6988, Largo

ProgressiveM

info@progressivem

**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:** [YOUR NAME], Maryland Renter, [ORGANIZATION/ POSITION IF APPLICABLE]

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is [YOUR NAME], and I am a renter in [YOUR CITY/ SENATE DISTRICT]. **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.

[Insert a few sentences about your personal experience: Why do you care? Did your landlord refuse to renew your lease without reason? How did it impact you and your family? Did you have to move suddenly or struggle to find new housing? If this hasn't happened to you, share a few sentences about what the stability that Good Cause creates would mean to you. ]

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.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION]

## **SB651\_FAV\_PLCC.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sheila Somashekhar

Position: FAV



Testimony before the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Regarding Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local  
Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

**Position:** SUPPORT (FAV)

February 14, 2025

Sheila Somashekhar  
Purple Line Corridor Coalition Director  
National Center for Smart Growth, University of Maryland

Good afternoon:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to participate at today's hearing.

My name is Sheila Somashekhar, and I am speaking on behalf of the Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC), a collaborative working on equitable development along the Purple Line. With its home at the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth, PLCC has developed a number of research-supported plans and policy priorities that address issues such as housing stability and affordability in gentrifying communities along the transit route.

PLCC has a stated goal in its [2023-2027 Housing Action Plan](#) to make sure residents have the choice to continue to live near the Purple Line. Along the Purple Line, 60 percent of households are renters, a share that has remained unchanged in the last two decades. Renting is more common among households in communities of color and in these places, many tenants pay a significant amount of their income (at least 30 percent if not more) on their housing costs. For many, renting is a long-term housing situation. While long-term rentership is increasingly common, renters often face precarious circumstances, many of which are outside of their direct control, and can be forced to move out their existing homes with limited recourse.

The Purple Line corridor has historically held some of the most affordable unsubsidized rental housing stock in the otherwise high-cost Washington metropolitan region. However, researchers have shown that residential rents within a half mile of the Purple Line are now [rising at a disproportionately rapid rate](#) even before rail service begins, likely due to anticipation of the future value of the land on which these homes sit. Rising property values and new rent stabilization policies create incentives for landlords to maximize profits through tenant turnover. This puts current Purple Line tenants at risk of displacement when landlords choose not to renew a lease – even for long-standing tenants who are paying their rent and

abiding by the terms of their lease. Such evictions can cause irreparable harm to families and disrupt entire communities.

[States and jurisdictions across the country are implementing just cause protections](#)

as a best practice tool to prevent unnecessary evictions through lease non-renewals, especially in gentrifying areas. With just three years remaining before the Purple Line is complete and families already facing growing rent pressures, we urge the Maryland General Assembly to support SB651.

Passing this legislation is important for the wellbeing of the communities along the Purple Line, and we encourage your support. Thank you, and please contact me at [ssomashe@umd.edu](mailto:ssomashe@umd.edu) if you wish to discuss further.

## **SB651- Good Cause Evictions - Dolamores - Support.**

Uploaded by: Stephanie Dolamore

Position: FAV

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. We are residents of District 43A. **We are testifying in support of SB 651.**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

**SB 651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.**

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. **When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.**<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. **Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or by race, disability, or sexual orientation.** Good Cause Eviction enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities and DC. **Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.**

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB 651.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Matthew & Stephanie Dolamore  
3718 Yolando Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21218  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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<sup>1</sup> [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbro.evictions.fallout.sf2015\\_2.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mdesmond/files/desmondkimbro.evictions.fallout.sf2015_2.pdf)

# **SB651\_Allen\_Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susan Allen

Position: FAV



**TO:** Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**RE:** SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT (FAVORABLE)  
**FROM:** Susan Allen  
3463 Rockway Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403  
Susanallen0@mac.com

Dear Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Susan Allen. I am with Maryland Poor People's Campaign, which is a part of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

Maryland Poor People's Campaign (MD PPC) demands legislation that protects the most vulnerable Marylanders—including those renters who suffer job cuts, inability to pay rent, and eviction without cause. Many of these vulnerable renters are families with children.

This Bill is important to my organization because safe and secure housing for all is a fundamental moral right for all Marylanders; Reverent Dr. King—the founder of our movement—was a persistent Housing Rights champion who played a crucial role in the passing the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

57 years after the Fair Housing Act, Maryland still fails to protect the rights of poor and low-wealth tenants by allowing landlords to evict them WITHOUT GOOD (or ANY) CAUSE.

For several years, the Policy Work Group of MD PPC has visited many of your offices to support Good Cause Eviction Legislation. We are dismayed that this Senate committee in 2024 did not vote to bring Local Good Cause to a floor vote.

A week ago, we joined 128 faith leaders from MD Just Power to visit legislative offices in support of SB651/HB709 Good Cause Eviction. Our team was surprised that some legislators did not know Local Good Cause Eviction is an enabling bill.

The following background on SB651 documents the failures of our state to protect renters faced with eviction.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a

tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Respectfully, Susan Allen

# **Takoma Park 2024 - SB 651 FAV - Good Cause Enablin**

Uploaded by: Talisha Searcy

Position: FAV



# CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

**Support Senate Bill 651 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies -  
Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**  
**House Environment & Transportation Committee**  
**February 18, 2025**

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of SB 651.

Stable housing is essential for daily life as it meets a basic human need.

SB 651 aims to promote stable housing by allowing counties to decide when it is appropriate not to renew rental agreements. Landlords and property owners can file "tenant holding over" cases if they choose not to renew a lease, which can involve reasons such as significant breach of lease, illegal activity by the tenant, or plans to remove the property from the rental market. However, current law does not require landlords to have a reason to evict tenants when a lease expires. This situation leaves families susceptible to eviction without cause. Legal assistance organizations have noted an increase in "tenant holding over" cases, resulting in more evictions.

SB 651 specifies various reasonable circumstances that qualify as causes for not renewing a lease. The City of Takoma Park agrees with these circumstances. Furthermore, the bill provides protections for renters against unfair treatment, discrimination, or unexpected evictions that could negatively impact individuals, families, and communities.

We have seen firsthand the heartbreak of involuntary displacement. Residents hurriedly packing or leaving their belongings on the street, often ruined by weather. Older adults and young families scrambling for shelter. Children having to move from one school to another. This upheaval affects not just the individuals and families but our entire community. The City has programs to help residents facing eviction. Yet, we still need to close a significant loophole to prevent these forced displacements.

The bill defines procedures and valid reasons for evictions, enabling landlords to evict tenants who violate their lease, engage in criminal activities, threaten other tenants, or fail to pay rent. It is important that eventually municipalities have clear authority to enforce similar measures in instances in which their respective county do not enact this legislation. However, this bill is a crucial step forward.

For these reasons, Takoma Park urges a favorable report on SB 651 so that counties and eventually municipalities can act on this issue. We thank Senator Smith for his leadership on this matter.

# **SB 651\_FAV\_Gilliam.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tenika Gilliam

Position: FAV

**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:** Tenika Gilliam

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Tenika Gilliam and I am a Marylander. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation - not a state mandate - so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

This bill is important to me because unreasonable evictions only compound how hard it is for many in our community to survive. I think this bill will help bring landlords and tenants closer together to better understand one another's circumstances and the procedure for how to avoid eviction. This may help one another connect on a payment plan, understand the physical/mental health challenges a tenant may be facing, or generally better communicate what needs to be done.

I was glad that this bill includes specific freezes on evictions during extreme weather conditions. I think it is important that we include heat emergencies. There really should be a freeze on all evictions during the coldest and hottest months of the year - and a particular focus on those who are on Section 8/vouchers. We should also have safeguards in place for evictions that would be occurring in particularly dangerous neighborhoods as it leaves evicted families particularly vulnerable.

We must think of children who may be impacted by an eviction and work towards ensuring no child experiences homelessness.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding

landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who - because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination - are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has no impact on new housing development.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states - California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington - as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

# **SB0651 Good Cause Eviction.pdf**

Uploaded by: Theresa M. Hoffman

Position: FAV



Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of District 43b. **I am testifying in support of SB0651.**



**Showing Up for Racial Justice**

SB0651 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur.

Whether homeowner or renter—across race, class, and zip code—all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Evictions make it impossible for many to stay in the homes and communities they love. When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks. Children who experience evictions suffer from declining school performance, increased drop-out rates, higher rates of adolescent violence, and worse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Without Good Cause Eviction laws, corporate landlords often non-renew leases as discrimination against families who have a housing voucher or discrimination by race, disability, or sexual orientation. Good Cause Eviction—enabling legislation can change that. Allowing local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws would prevent people from being evicted unless the landlord provides a good reason.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws. As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent the more than 30,000 Marylanders experiencing homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Good Cause Eviction, SB0651**. Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Theresa M. Hoffman  
803 Seaward Rd., Towson, MD 21286  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

## **2025 MD PPC Good Cause Senate Committee Testimony.**

Uploaded by: Thomas Kennedy

Position: FAV

**TO:** Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**RE:** SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT (FAVORABLE)  
**From:** Thomas Kennedy  
4002 Laird Place, Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
kennedymedia@gmail.com

Dear Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Thomas Kennedy, a member of the Maryland Poor People's Campaign (MD PPC) Policy Work Group team and a member of the state coordinating committee which is a coalition partner of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

Maryland Poor People's Campaign (MD PPC) demands legislation that protects the most vulnerable Marylanders—including those renters who suffer job cuts, inability to pay rent, and eviction without cause. Many of these vulnerable renters are families with children.

This Bill is important to my organization because safe and secure housing for all is a fundamental moral right for all Marylanders; Reverent Dr. King—the founder of our movement—was a persistent Housing Rights champion who played a crucial role in the passing the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

57 years after the Fair Housing Act, Maryland still falls to protect the rights of poor and low-wealth tenants by allowing landlords to evict them WITHOUT GOOD (or ANY) CAUSE.

For several years, the Policy Work Group of MD PPC has visited many of your offices to support Good Cause Eviction Legislation. We are dismayed that this Senate committee in 2024 did not vote to bring Local Good Cause to a floor vote.

A week ago, we joined 128 faith leaders from MD Just Power to visit legislative offices in support of SB651/HB709 Good Cause Eviction. Our team was surprised that some legislators did not know Local Good Cause Eviction is an enabling bill.

The following overview of SB651 documents the failures of our state to protect renters faced with eviction.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a

tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

Sincerely,  
Thomas Kennedy

# **SB651\_FAV\_Butler.pdf**

Uploaded by: TJ Butler

Position: FAV

**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:** Thomas Butler

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Thomas Butler and I live in zip code 21211 in Baltimore City. I am speaking as a supporter of Renters United Maryland. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

As part of a cooperative property management company, we are struggling. When landlords like us take steps to be more responsible to our tenants, it costs us money. This is to be expected, since as a cooperative our goal is not simply profit above all but a triple bottom line: people, place, and then profit after the first two have been addressed. What is not ok is that no other rental management company that I know of gives as much leeway before pursuing eviction. Because of this, we are at a loss compared to any property management company that does not extend the resources or even courtesy of making sure that tenants are not evicted purely for profit or revenge. If other companies could be held to our standard, then at least we would all know that tenants are not being evicted purely to pursue raising rent, extracting profit, or retaliation against tenants organizing against unsafe living conditions.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions, enabling disrespectful business practices by our competitors. SB 651 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who – because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination – are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has [no impact on new housing development](#).

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.

# **CASH\_SB 651\_SUPPORT.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tonaeya Moore

Position: FAV





**SB 651 - Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**February 18, 2025**

**SUPPORT**

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 651. This bill will provide renter protections in Maryland.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for no good reason and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB 651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

CASH Campaign supports this bill because a “no cause” eviction is the breeding ground for corporate landlords to disguise prejudice and evict tenants based on race, disability, family status, or other discriminatory reasons without accountability. Without good cause protections, tenants can be removed from their homes despite paying rent on time and following all lease terms, leaving them vulnerable to sudden displacement and housing insecurity. This disproportionately impacts low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities, many of whom already face systemic barriers to stable housing. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that [Good Cause Eviction has no impact on new housing development](#).

**Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 651.**

*Creating Assets, Savings and Hope*

# **SB651\_FAV\_Ahmadzai.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tonia Chestnut

Position: FAV



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

P.O. Box 6988, Largo MD 20774

ProgressiveMaryland.org

Info@progressivemaryland.org

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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:** Wanda Hutchins-Strahan, Maryland Renter

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee

My name is Zakirullah Ahmadzai, 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.

It's not right for landlords to evict tenants without providing a reason, and that tenants deserve to know the specific reasons for any eviction notice they receive. These bills generally aim to protect tenants from arbitrary or retaliatory evictions by requiring landlords to demonstrate a legitimate, "good cause" for terminating a tenancy. The idea is to ensure transparency and fairness in the eviction process.

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.

Sincerely,

Zakirullah Ahmadzai  
wanda.strahan@hotmail.com

# **SB651\_FAV\_Hutchins-Strahan.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tonia Chestnut

Position: FAV



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

P.O. Box 6988, Largo MD 20774

ProgressiveMaryland.org

Info@progressivemaryland.org

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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:** Wanda Hutchins-Strahan, Maryland Renter

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee

My name is Wanda Hutchins-Strahan, 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.

I'm a strong supporter of implementing the Good Cause law to protect tenants especially for those living in a "troubled" community like the one I reside in now. Filing complaints with the leasing office and voicing other concerns can cause retaliation. Tenants should be protected by law so that they can bring concerns without fearing for loss of housing without just cause. Particularly now when the economy is unstable and many are struggling to maintain without fears of finding a new home on short notice for no reason.

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.

Sincerely,

Wanda Hutchins-Strahan

wanda.strahan@hotmail.com

# **SB 651\_FAV\_Spriggs.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tonya Spriggs

Position: FAV

**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:** Tonya Spriggs

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Tonya Spriggs and I am a Marylander. I am submitting this **testimony in support of SB 651 Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).**

Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict a tenant for *no good reason* and as a result many Marylanders are facing severe housing instability. In our state, 5,000+ families are made homeless each year because of an eviction and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year. There is a dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

SB651 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Again, this is local enabling legislation - not a state mandate - so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.

This bill is important to me because I am currently going through a similar situation - I have been dealing with an ongoing pest infestation in my apartment building which has meant I had to pull all items out of closets and cupboards to place in areas where pests could not as easily get to. All of my items are at risk of being destroyed and I don't want to speak up too much as I can tell that it is impacting the way my landlord interacts with me.

I know there are things I can improve as a tenant and I am working on that, but I am now scared that I could lose my housing simply because the relationship is souring. We need a fair process like this where landlords and tenants have a clear process they must follow. This has been going on for years, I also grew up in an apartment where there was a gaping hole in the ceiling that the landlords would not fix and we had to deal with mice and water that would fall down into our home.

From past and present experience, I am totally against people being evicted without good cause and I want to ensure they have protections to speak up.

The current law in Maryland allows for landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 651

would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 651 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability.

Research shows that good cause eviction laws greatly decrease eviction filings meaning that fewer Marylanders would be at risk of being put out of their homes. This would mean fewer evictions for Black Maryland residents who - because of centuries of government-sponsored housing discrimination - are disproportionately impacted by evictions. 1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism. The research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has no impact on new housing development.

As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Eight states - California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington - as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

For this reason, I urge a favorable report on SB 651.



## **LBC - Support**

Uploaded by: Ufuoma Agarín

Position: FAV



# LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3185 • 800-492-7122 Ext. 3185 • Black.Caucus@house.state.md.us

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

# **SB 651 - Good Cause Evictions - SWASC - FAV .pdf**

Uploaded by: UM SWASC

Position: FAV

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 651**  
**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good**  
**Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**  
*Judicial Proceedings Committee*  
**February 18, 2025**

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports SB 651**, which would authorize counties to create and enforce rules to stop landlords from failing to renew a lease and/or terminating a holdover tenancy without a valid reason.

**Evictions inflict profound harm on families and communities.** Marylanders facing evictions are at risk of experiencing homelessness, hospitalization, reduced financial earnings, increased debt, and lifelong barriers to economic security.<sup>1</sup> During the COVID-19 eviction moratorium, there was a significant reduction in rates of homelessness in Maryland, but since then, there has been a 56% increase in the number of evictions in Maryland from 2023 to 2024 and the number of Marylanders experiencing homelessness has correspondingly risen.<sup>2</sup> SB 651 can reduce the number of eviction proceedings to only those with good cause, sparing many struggling Marylanders from experiencing homelessness and other traumatizing effects.

**The current law in Maryland allows landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason.** In FY 2024, Maryland landlords filed over 5,000 “no-cause” evictions.<sup>3</sup> Allowing landlords to evict tenants without cause fosters fear of retaliation and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. Enabling jurisdictions to pass good cause laws would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination.

**Research shows that landlords are more likely to seek punitive action against tenants who live in communities of color.**<sup>4</sup> While racially based housing discrimination is already illegal under Maryland law<sup>5</sup> and federal law<sup>6</sup>, the burden of proof falls on the victim, who would be experiencing eviction. Alternatively, this bill presents a compassionate response that would help to insulate Marylanders from discriminatory

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<sup>1</sup> Collinson, Robert, John Eric Humphries, Nicholas Mader, Davin Reed, Daniel Tannenbaum, and Winnie van Dijk. 2024. “Eviction and Poverty in American Cities\*.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 139 (1): 57–120. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjad042>.

<sup>2</sup> “District Court of Maryland Eviction Case Data | Open Data | Opendata.Maryland.Gov.” n.d. Accessed February 9, 2025. [https://opendata.maryland.gov/Housing/District-Court-of-Maryland-Eviction-Case-Data/mvqb-b4hf/about\\_data](https://opendata.maryland.gov/Housing/District-Court-of-Maryland-Eviction-Case-Data/mvqb-b4hf/about_data).

<sup>3</sup> “ROOTED IN MARYLAND.” 2025. Renters United Maryland. <https://rentersunitedmaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/RUM-Good-Cause-1-pager-2.7.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Campa, Elijah A. de la, and Vincent J. Reina. 2023. “Landlords’ Rental Businesses before and after the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from a National Cross-Site Survey.” *Journal of Housing Economics* 59 (March):101904. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhe.2022.101904>.

<sup>5</sup> Md. Code § 20-101, 20-704, 20-705

<sup>6</sup> 42 U.S. Code § 3601

effects by requiring the landlords to justify good reason for eviction rather than requiring victims to prove discrimination has occurred when they are already suffering its effects.

**As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.** SB 651 takes a decisive step towards protecting tenants from unfair and unjust evictions, which is vitally necessary considering that in FY 24, no-cause eviction filings rose 62% compared to pre-COVID filings.<sup>7</sup> Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities. Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws, leaving Marylanders unnecessarily vulnerable to housing insecurity and homelessness – and the State often in the position of footing the bill for these often preventable social ills.

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change urges a favorable report on SB 651.**

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*Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.*

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<sup>7</sup> "ROOTED IN MARYLAND." 2025. Renters United Maryland. <https://rentersunitedmaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/RUM-Good-Cause-1-pager-2.7.pdf>.

# **SB0651 - Maryland Legal Aid - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Zafar Shah

Position: FAV



**SB0651 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,  
February 18, 2025

**Position: FAVORABLE**

*Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) submits its written and oral testimony on SB0651 at the request of bill Senator Clarence Lam.*

MLA is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal services to the State's low-income and vulnerable residents. We serve residents in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions and handle a range of civil legal matters, most prominently those arising from housing insecurity. MLA upholds the right to housing, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for which a principal tenet is security of tenure. SB0651 is a vital measure to ensure security for low- and middle-income renting Households. MLA urges the Committee's favorable report on SB0651.

When it comes to lease non-renewals, Maryland is currently a "no cause" state – that is, a landlord may non-renew a lease without needing any justification to do so. This means that working people, families, and elders face potential displacement, year to year or month to month, even when they follow all the rules. These "good" tenants are under constant pressure to accept declining conditions and unfair treatment just to stay rooted in their communities.

SB0651 is enabling legislation that would give clear legislating power to Maryland counties and to Baltimore City to establish "just cause" or "good cause" requirements for lease non-renewals. **This bill is enabling legislation**, expressly granting authority to localities to decide when it is appropriate for rental agreements to be non-renewed. SB0651 sets a standard "good cause" policy and allows local legislatures to opt into that policy. Without SB0651, local efforts are constrained by state preemption. SB0651 gives localities clear authority on this issue, with guardrails set by the state.

***MLA supports Good Cause Eviction because of clients like Beverly Grossman.***

Beverly Grossman loves her home. She loves her neighborhood, not far from Towson University. The 85-year-old lives on a limited income and feels lucky to have a manageable monthly rent. But after four years at her apartment, Ms. Grossman sensed that the property manager had an issue with her. Though never in violation of her lease and never missing a rent payment, Ms. Grossman was on the property manager's "shitlist." In April 2024, Ms. Grossman decided to contact the management company to communicate the issues she was experiencing with their on-site employee. A few weeks later, the property manager notified her that her lease would not be renewed, citing "undesirable and improper conduct." When pressed, the property manager revealed that the non-renewal was payback for her call to the corporate office.



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Facing lease expiration in September 2024, Ms. Grossman sought legal representation from MLA. Luckily for Ms. Grossman, her building is a Low Income Housing Tax Credit property. Federal regulations require the owner to have good cause to pursue a lease termination. Payback for tenant complaints is not a good cause, per regulations. Nonetheless, management filed a “Tenant Holding Over” eviction case against Ms. Grossman. Ultimately, in November 2024, the district court dismissed the landlord’s claim.

Ms. Grossman describes feeling “completely spent” by having to fight to keep her apartment and stay in her community. “This experience killed me spiritually and took the wind right out of my sails,” she told us recently. In fact, she had experienced cardiac symptoms and underwent two EKG tests during this time of instability. The diagnosis from her medical providers: undue stress.

According to Ms. Grossman, the only way she survived the situation was because of “Maryland Legal Aid and Jesus.” Legally, however, she survived because of the good cause eviction protection that exists in the federal regulations applicable to her property – which she had not even known about. SB0651 would enable Maryland counties to establish similar protections in local law.

### ***SB0651 sets guardrails on local good cause protection.***

“Good cause” means that a landlord must have a justified reason, determined by statute, for choosing not to renew an expiring lease. Notably, SB0651 sets for the list of “good causes” in section 8-402.3, on pages 5-6 of the bill, and that list would be mandatory for any jurisdiction that opts into the good cause policy. The list is identical to that of HB0477 as passed in the House in 2024. These grounds for lease non-renewal are found in both federal housing regulations and in state and municipal just cause laws.

SB0651 authorizes localities to adopt this list and does not allow them to establish alternative lists. The bill establishes the following grounds for lease non-renewal:

1. Tenant committed a substantial breach of the lease or repeated minor violations of the lease;
2. Tenant habitually failed to pay rent when due;
3. Tenant caused substantial damage to the property;
4. Tenant engaged in disorderly conduct;
5. Tenant engaged in illegal activity on or around the premises;
6. Tenant refused to provide access to the property for inspection or repairs;
7. Tenant refused to accept the offer of a new lease agreement;
8. Landlord seeks to use the property for a personal or familial use;
9. Landlord seeks to make substantial repairs/renovations;
10. Landlord seeks to remove the property from the rental market for a year or more.

### ***Small Landlords Are Exempted from Good Cause Eviction***

SB0651 also establishes that the good cause policy, if enacted locally, may not apply to owner-occupied rental units, nor to properties owned by small landlords. The small landlord exemption is tailored to reduce loopholes that might be exploited by disguised corporate landlords.

To meet the small landlord exemption under subsection (c), on pages 7-8 of the bill, a property owner may not own more than 5 residential rental units in the state. Ownership of rental units encompasses owning or controlling units *in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, or through other legal entities*. This formulation of the exemption excludes property owners that may appear in name to own 5 or fewer units but have additional holdings under different names or through entity structures.



Small landlord = 5 or fewer units across the state. (Subsection (c)(1))



If the landlord is one or more natural persons, no single person may own more than 5 units. (Subsection (d)(1))



If the landlord is an entity, then no natural person or entity with a direct or indirect ownership/membership interest in the landlord may own more than 5 units. (Subsection (d)(1))

However, a person's non-controlling interests in investment assets like stocks, mutual funds, and real estate investment trusts do not count toward rental ownership in the bill. (Subsection (d)(2).)

When a landlord invokes the small landlord exemption, either as a requirement of a lease execution or renewal (section 8-208(c)(3)(iii) at pages 2-3) or as part of a Tenant Holding Over complaint (section 8-402(e)(3)(iii)(1-3)), the bill requires the landlord to disclose information about its holdings:

- The legal name of each individual or entity with a direct/indirect ownership or membership interest in the rental unit;
- The number of rental units held by each of the named individuals or entities; and
- The addresses of the rental units.

The bill requires disclosure of this information on a form published by the Office of Tenant and Landlord Affairs. Crucially, if a landlord fails to make the small landlord disclosures as required, they are *not* exempted from the local good cause eviction law.

***It is past time to protect all Maryland residents from arbitrary non-renewals.***

This bill marks the 13th year since 2008 that the General Assembly will have considered “just cause” eviction legislation, including bills specific to Prince George’s County and Montgomery County. During the COVID-19 state of emergency, Baltimore City passed a short-term provision to require just cause for lease non-renewals

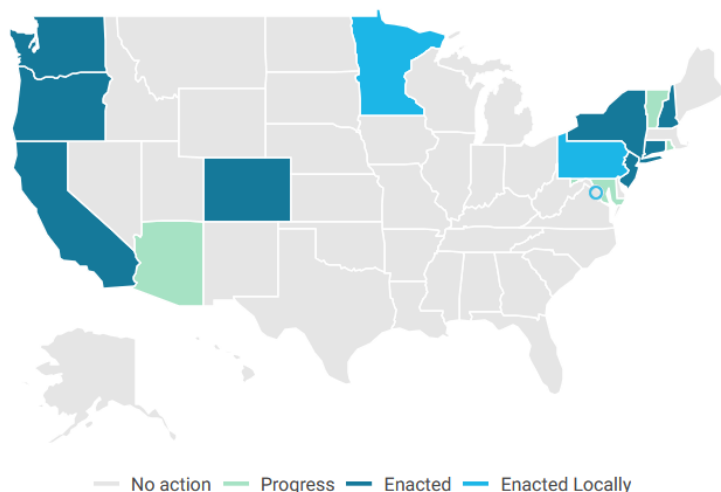
until 6 months after the state of emergency's end. These efforts demonstrate a sustained desire in Maryland localities for just cause protection.

For certain segments of Maryland's rental market – mobile homes and federally subsidized housing – just cause eviction protection has aided residents for decades. Maryland enacted protections for mobile home park tenants in 1980, including the protection against non-renewals without cause. There are an estimated 7,000 occupied mobile home rentals throughout the state. Project-based "Section 8" rental assistance requires property owners to have a good cause for non-renewal of a lease. There are nearly 2,000 such properties in Maryland, accounting for over 137,000 rental units. The federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program also requires property owners to have a good cause to non-renew a lease. There are more than 830 of these properties throughout the state, accounting for around 78,000 units.

In total, Maryland's stock of just-cause-protected properties numbers around 222,000 units, equivalent to a rental market greater than that of any one of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Prince George's County, or Montgomery County.

## Good Cause Eviction

Mapping the US jurisdictions that have enacted or made progress on good cause eviction



Neighboring cities Washington, D.C. (1985) and Philadelphia (2018) have adopted just cause eviction policies, as have New Hampshire (2015), California (2019), Oregon (2019), and Washington (2021). Last year, Colorado and New York each passed a statewide just cause eviction bills. New Jersey adopted just cause requirements as part of worker protection legislation in 1974. In 1980, Connecticut enacted just cause requirements for renters over age 61 and renters with disabilities who live in buildings of five or more units.

In many European Union countries, including France and Germany, just cause eviction protection is a standard requirement of privately owned rental housing.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Which European Union nations have laws that require landlords to have a stated reason or 'good cause' to terminate an expiring residential rental agreement?" prompt, ChatGPT-4-turbo, Open AI, <https://chatgpt.com> (Feb. 14, 2025).

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### ***Good cause eviction protections do not hurt community-economic development.***

A new data analysis by the Loyola University Maryland's Economics Department Chair Jeremy Schwartz and researchers at the University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs evaluated building permit data in states that recently enacted good cause eviction laws – California (2019), Oregon (2019), and New Hampshire (2015). **Their analysis found “no evidence that the introduction of Good Cause Eviction Protections in California, Oregon, and New Hampshire resulted in a decline of new construction.”**<sup>2</sup>

“[P]ermits did not decline in California and Oregon counties relative to the changes occurring in surrounding states. In fact, the data show an increase in permits by 41 per100,000 residents after the legislation passed relative to the comparison counties, though this result was not statistically significant.” While permitting decreased in New Hampshire following the 2015 enactment of good cause eviction, “the rate of change in New Hampshire was not statistically different from the change in surrounding states,” namely Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont, which do not have good cause eviction laws.<sup>3</sup>

New Jersey's statewide just cause policy demonstrates, over a 50-year period, that the benefit of just cause outweighs hypothetical impediments on development. “According to data from the Eviction Lab, New Jersey cities such as Trenton, Paterson, Jersey City, and West New York have among the lowest eviction rates in the country. Meanwhile, construction is absolutely exploding.”<sup>4</sup>

Just cause eviction policies have shown positive impact on the stability of housing and community for low-income renters. Looking at four localities in California, a 2019 Princeton/Eviction Lab study found that “just cause eviction ordinances have a statistically significant negative effect on eviction and eviction filing rates” and concluded that “[g]iven the budget limitations of many states and municipalities to fund other solutions to the eviction crisis, passage of just cause eviction ordinances appears to be a relatively low-cost, effective policy solution.”<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, a recent analysis demonstrates that just cause policies “help the lowest socioeconomic status residents remain in gentrifying neighborhoods, where displacement pressures may be especially strong for vulnerable residents.”<sup>6</sup> Assessing nine “hot-market areas,” researchers from Berkeley's Urban Displacement Project, the Changing Cities Research Lab at Stanford University, and the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco concluded that while just cause laws do not encourage new low-income residents to move into a

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Goetz et al., Letter submitted to Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee (Jan. 21, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Henry Graber, “New York Needs to Learn a Housing Lesson From ... New Jersey? Starting—but not stopping—with eviction laws.” *Slate* (Feb. 8, 2022), <https://slate.com/business/2022/02/new-york-good-cause-eviction-new-jersey-housing.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Julietta Cuellar et al., “The Effect of Just Cause Eviction Ordinances on Eviction in Four California Cities,” *Journal of Public and International Affairs* 31 (2020): 99-125, available at <https://jpia.princeton.edu/news/effect-just-cause-eviction-ordinances-eviction-four-california>.

<sup>6</sup> Karen Chapple et al., “Housing Market Interventions and Residential Mobility in the San Francisco Bay Area,” Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (March 15, 2022), [https://news.berkeley.edu/story\\_jump/how-housing-production-policies-impact-displacement](https://news.berkeley.edu/story_jump/how-housing-production-policies-impact-displacement).

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jurisdiction, “[r]enters make fewer downward moves from neighborhoods where more units are covered by just cause protections—suggesting people are able to make planned moves.”<sup>7</sup>

A 2020 study on the effect of just cause protection on entrepreneurial activities found that just cause eviction ordinances in five California cities “increase[d] the number of new, small businesses by 6.9%.”<sup>8</sup> The researchers proposed that just cause policy “significantly enhances renters’ welfare by allowing them to take on risky, but potentially successful, entrepreneurial endeavors. Thus, local renter protection policies have a surprising benefit of promoting job creation and economic growth by encouraging more entrepreneurial activities.”<sup>9</sup> This study showed significant decreased poverty in areas where the ordinances were enacted and found “no significant changes in... local Senate price growth.”<sup>10</sup>

Industry-backed opponents of just cause protections often suggest, without evidence, that “no cause” non-renewals and evictions are essential to development. Yet, decades of state preemption of just cause ordinances did not attract developers and spur production of affordable housing. Maryland lands in the bottom 10 nationally in terms of shortage of affordable and available rental units per 100 extremely low-income renter Households.<sup>11</sup> Maryland boasts a shortage of 138,118 units for low-income Households, according to a 2024 study.<sup>12</sup>

***Just cause policy balances the court process in eviction cases.***

Although Maryland lacks data directly about the incidence of lease non-renewals, judicial data about “Tenant Holding Over” (THO) eviction cases provide some useful insights. Landlords filed 409 THO cases per month on average in 2024, totaling 4,908 cases for the year. In a THO case, the tenant is alleged to have stayed over the expired term of the lease. These court cases do not require the landlord to provide a reason for their decision not to renew the lease. For most tenants who lack just cause protection, there is no defense to THO proceedings absent a procedural defect or a showing of retaliation.

The average monthly total of THO filings has exceeded the pre-Covid-19 average for 40 straight months. From August 2020, when district courts reopened after the initial Covid-19 shutdown, to October 2023, the monthly filing average reached a sustained 100% increase over the pre-pandemic level. Over the past 12 months of available data, we also see that the average of monthly THO filings is over 60% higher than the pre-pandemic

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<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> Steven Xiao and Serena Xiao, “Renter Protection and Entrepreneurship,” SSRN Electronic Journal. 10.2139/ssrn.3574364 (2020) (examining the impact of just cause eviction ordinances in Glendale (2002), Oakland (2002), San Diego (2003), East Palo Alto (2010), and Santa Monica (2010)).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes* 17, Fig. 10 (March 2023), available at [https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/gap/Gap-Report\\_2023.pdf](https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/gap/Gap-Report_2023.pdf); see also National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners, Inc., 2020 Maryland Housing Needs Assessment and 10-Year Strategic Plan 9 (2020), available at <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Documents/Other%20Publications/Report.pdf> (citing a shortage of 85,000 rental units for extremely low-income Households).

<sup>12</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, *The GAP: Maryland*, <https://nlihc.org/gap/state/md>.

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level. In other words, eviction cases based on lease non-renewals spiked during the public health emergency, and the numbers have not come back down.

Maryland's existing protection against retaliatory lease terminations (Real Property § 8-208.1), while helpful, is rarely invoked successfully as a defense to THO evictions. The law has numerous gaps that local just cause protections would fill:

- The retaliatory eviction statute applies only to “periodic tenancies,” such as month-to-month or automatically renewing leases. Consequently, tenants in 12-month leases have no protection from retaliatory eviction.
- The retaliatory eviction statute protects a limited list of protected activities, and that protection ends 6 months after the tenant's protected activity occurred.
- The renter has the burden of proving the landlord's retaliatory motive – without having the benefit of discovery or time to subpoena records or witnesses.

SB0651 allows localities to establish broader protection against retaliation by requiring landlords to state a statutorily permitted reason for non-renewal and to prove that reason in court.

SB0651 ensures local legislatures can pass enforceable laws whereby no one is arbitrarily deprived of their housing. This enabling legislation recognizes that local legislatures desire to stabilize rental housing so that residents can contribute to the workforce and the local economy. Requiring good cause as a precondition for an eviction can boost the stability of the housing market by stabilizing families, neighborhoods, and communities.

Maryland Legal Aid urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 651. If you have any questions, please contact:

Zafar S. Shah  
*Advocacy Director for Human Right to Housing*  
zshah@mdlab.org | (410) 951-7672

## **SB651.pdf**

Uploaded by: Zainab Chaudry

Position: FAV



## Council on American-Islamic Relations

### CAIR Office in Maryland

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

#### Washington D.C.

Alabama Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Florida Georgia Illinois Kansas Kentucky Maryland  
Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri New Jersey New York North Carolina Ohio Oklahoma Pennsylvania  
Texas Washington



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](mailto: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>

**Washington D.C.**

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# **SB651 Good Cause FAV2025.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Zoe Gallagher

Position: FAV



**SB651 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause  
Termination (Good Cause Eviction)  
Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,  
Feb. 18, 2025  
Position: FAVORABLE**

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02/18/2025

The Honorable Chair Smith  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights and equity for Maryland families through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland. Economic Action is also a member of the steering committee for Renters United Maryland, a coalition of organizations dedicated to strengthening tenant protections throughout the state.

I am writing today to urge your favorable report on SB651, which would remove Maryland's prohibition on good cause legislation, and enable localities to pass good cause laws, should they want to do so. Good cause legislation prohibits "no cause" eviction or lease non-renewal, meaning tenants are safe from arbitrary or retaliatory eviction. Good cause legislation does *not* mean that a landlord cannot evict a tenant for failure to pay rent, breach of lease violations, reclaiming the property for personal use, and several other typical reasons for eviction outlined in the bill.

Our tenant advocacy program has a hotline for renters and landlords to call for advice about their rights and responsibilities under the law as well as receive warm referrals to legal services and other assistance. Our staff attorney also provides brief legal advice to tenants. We serve between 900-1200 Maryland residents a year with the majority of tenants living in Central Maryland. Lease non-renewal is a serious concern, especially with private equity firms purchasing properties all around the state.

Because Maryland is a "no cause" state, municipalities are not able to pass good cause laws. This means a landlord does not have to provide any justification for lease non-renewals, putting tenants in a vulnerable position where they have no idea whether or not their lease will be renewed the following year. 5,000+ Maryland families are made homeless each year because of an eviction, and In FY24, landlords filed 5,104 "no cause" eviction – known as "tenant holding over" cases.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://rentersunitedmaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/RUM-Good-Cause-1-pager-2.7.pdf>  
2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD · 21218 · 410-220-0494  
info@econaction.org · www.econaction.org  
Tax ID 52-2266235

Economic Action Maryland Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Housing stability is incredibly important for the wellbeing of children and adults alike. Low-income children who switch schools frequently due to housing instability tend to perform less well in school and are less likely to graduate from high school. Adults facing housing instability have worse mental health outcomes and higher levels of anxiety and depression<sup>2</sup>.

Additionally, moving is an incredibly costly process that can put a renter back thousands of dollars. Not only are tenants required to pay first month's rent and a new security deposit before receiving the one from their last unit back, they must also pay the cost of moving supplies. It can also be incredibly difficult to even find another unit that is affordable based on income, leading many to become further cost burdened by rent.

There have also been instances of landlords retaliating against their low-income tenants for organizing and demanding repairs for safer living conditions by refusing to renew the tenant's lease. Retaliation from landlords is used as a fear tactic to prevent tenants from asking for repairs and improvements in their rental units, forcing tenants to live in substandard housing or risk losing their homes.

Since renters are more likely to be low-income than homeowners,<sup>3</sup> these problems become an issue of economic justice, where low-income renters are more likely to be thrown into financial instability because of Maryland's "no cause" policy on lease non-renewals.

This should be seen as a local rights issue. No municipality should be barred from passing legislation that would remediate the affordable housing and eviction crisis most counties in the state are experiencing. Every county is different, and not all might need this legislation, but it should be an option for the counties that want to do so. As Maryland's budget deficit looms, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

Everyone should be provided with a reasonable level of housing security regardless of their income level. For these reasons we urge a favorable report on SB651.

Sincerely,  
Zoe Gallagher, Policy Associate

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<sup>2</sup><https://nhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/The-Impacts-of-Affordable-Housing-on-Health-A-Research-Summary.pdf>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/08/02/as-national-eviction-ban-expires-a-look-at-who-rents-and-who-owns-in-the-u-s/>

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# **SB0651\_FWA\_City of Rockville\_Landlord & Tenant - R**

Uploaded by: Monique Ashton

Position: FWA



**Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville**  
**SB 651 – Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies –**  
**Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**  
**SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT**

Good afternoon, Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I am Monique Ashton, Mayor of Rockville. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the City of Rockville in support of SB 651, which would authorize a county to adopt a good cause eviction ordinance. We thank Senator Muse for sponsoring this important legislation.

Good cause eviction prohibits a landlord from failing to renew or terminate a residential lease without reasonable justification. A stable home provides a foundation for overall well-being, and being unfairly forced to move can uproot a household from their community, social network, and employment, and can also lead to homelessness. These risks are especially acute for low-income and otherwise marginalized renters, many who may fear to speak up about their living conditions, discrimination, or other illegal behavior from landlords due to fear of their lease not being renewed in retaliation.

Although this legislation would not apply to municipalities, the Rockville Mayor and Council take the issue of housing stability seriously and support steps to move the State in a direction that provides more housing security for tenants. We care deeply about our community, wherein nearly half of the households are renters. Many residents reach out to our city seeking assistance in cases where they feel their lease has been terminated or not renewed unjustly, and currently we are limited in how we may help those residents. As a part of an overarching effort to improve housing affordability and stability across the City of Rockville, we have developed 43 action items and would like to be able to add consideration of a good cause eviction ordinance to that list. ***In that vein, we respectfully request an amendment to the bill language to enable municipalities to enact such legislation, in addition to counties.***

In conclusion, strong and fair tenant protections will make Maryland and Rockville a more fair, equitable, and desirable place to live. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to provide SB 651 with a favorable with amendments report. Thank you.

# **SB0651\_ScottWebber\_FAV\_AMENDMENT.pdf**

Uploaded by: Scott Webber

Position: FWA

Hearing In The Maryland Senate Set for February 18, 2025

Scott Webber  
8803 Seven Locks Road  
Bethesda, MD 20817

**TESTIMONY ON SB0651**  
**FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies -  
Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**TO:** Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

My name is Scott Webber, resident of Montgomery County, Maryland, submitting this testimony in support of SB0651 with minor amendments.

As a licensed Realtor [Real Estate Salesperson] in Maryland who engages in the rental market, it would be great for business to have rapid turnover every year or two... or even several times a year, each round producing another commission. However, as a homeowner, a landlord, a renter, taxpayer, socially responsible resident, and a person of faith, I am also acutely aware that housing stability is essential for any community to thrive. Further, the cost of housing instability is staggering, and its impact is felt across nearly every element of society. In other words, housing stability is both fiscally and socially reasonable, responsible, and required.

Evictions are disruptive and costly, both to landlords, but disproportionately to tenants, and frequently, tenants who can least afford any such crisis. At the same time, evictions are also necessary under certain circumstances, involving not only lease violations by tenants, but the desire of a property owner to use the property for their own purposes. In such circumstances, termination of a lease / eviction - after notice - is reasonable, just and fair.

I can further testify that evictions often result in - sometimes substantial - costs to taxpayers, as evicted tenants suddenly become reliant upon government services, and/or governmentally funded partners and/or non-profits to provide emergency housing, food, transportation and other essential needs for a suddenly unhoused family, and not just for the adult rental signatories, but also for their dependant children, and/or senior parents. Stable housing policy is wise fiscal policy.

Notwithstanding the practicalities of limiting tenant turnover, eviction solely for the purpose of switching otherwise abiding tenants, with alternative and/or preferentially selected tenants - **WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE** - is nothing short of Fair Housing discrimination! Such discriminatory behavior should not be allowed, any more than a restaurant being allowed to



selectively seat - or turn away - diners based on their names, or a health club's ability to cancel a gym membership to one family simply because some other family is willing to pay more, unless there is reasonable justification - Good Cause - such as a history of disruption, or failure to follow membership policies. Fairness and equality of access - and maintenance - to housing must be the law of the land [and the buildings sitting upon].

### **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:**

Page 4. Line 27. Changing 'FIRST-CLASS MAIL WITH A CERTIFICATE OF MAILING' TO 'CERTIFIED MAIL' to make it consistent with the vast majority of land-use notification Statutes and Rules.

Page 6. Line 5. Changing 'NOTICE' TO 'WRITTEN NOTICE' to be consistent with similar requirements in the Statute.

Page 8. Line 11. Changing 'NOTICE' TO 'WRITTEN NOTICE' to be consistent with similar requirements in the Statute.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0651 with the Proposed Amendments, *supra.*

Most Sincerely,

~Scott Webber

# **MMHA - 2025 - SB 651 - Good Cause.pdf**

Uploaded by: Aaron Greenfield

Position: UNF



**Bill Title:** Senate Bill 651, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

**Committee:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**Date:** February 18, 2025

**Position:** Unfavorable

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA), a professional trade association established in 1996. MMHA represents owners and managers of over 207,246 rental housing homes across 937 apartment communities, providing housing for more than 667,000 residents throughout Maryland. MMHA also includes 216 associate members who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry. More information about MMHA is available at <https://www.mmhaonline.org/>.

Senate Bill 651 enables Maryland counties to adopt local laws requiring housing providers to provide valid reasons—referred to as "good cause"—for terminating a lease or a holdover tenancy. The bill applies to housing providers owning six or more rental units but exempts owner-occupied properties. It requires landlords to provide written notices explaining whether the good cause law applies to them and justifying lease non-renewals or terminations.

MMHA has the following concerns with Senate Bill 651:

1. **Fundamental Shift in Two-Party Contracts:** Senate Bill 651 fundamentally alters the nature of a lease, changing it from a two-party contract into a unilateral agreement. For the first time in Maryland's history, this bill establishes a tenant's property ownership interest in a rental unit. This concept nullifies the long-standing legal framework around tenant holdover status, effectively granting tenants a form of "life tenancy." Such a change undermines the owner's "bundle of property rights" and violates constitutional protections, as highlighted in *Muskin v. SDAT*, 422 Md. 544, 30 A.3d 962 (2011).
2. **Inherent Imbalance in Good Cause Eviction:** Senate Bill 651 creates a fundamental imbalance in the landlord-tenant relationship. While tenants may terminate their leases without providing any cause, landlords would be required to justify their decisions with good cause. This one-sided requirement legislates an unfair dynamic that places disproportionate burdens on housing providers, undermining the principle of mutual accountability.
3. **Impact on Quiet Enjoyment and Property Management:** By requiring housing providers to obtain a court order to terminate leases and remove problem residents, the bill erodes property owners' ability to protect their residents' right to quiet enjoyment. Property managers would no longer be able to promptly address issues caused by disruptive residents, subjecting other residents to prolonged disturbances or even dangerous situations while awaiting judicial outcomes. This delay compromises the safety and quality of life of good residents, often leading to their departure.
4. **Challenges with Evidence Collection:** To meet the good cause standard, housing providers must rely on enhanced documentation and public records. However, obtaining

such documentation through Public Information Act (PIA) requests is often time-consuming, inconsistent, and costly. Police and fire departments frequently delay responses, with records sometimes taking up to 60 days to obtain. Additionally, reports are often heavily redacted or denied due to ongoing investigations, and costs can reach \$25 per initial report. This creates logistical and financial burdens for housing providers while increasing demands on public safety agencies. Furthermore, often there are no actual police reports, the incident is coded by responding police as “no report.” This is quite common in loud music, disorderly conduct, neighbor disputes, unknown trouble types of calls, a record of the 911 call exists, however no detail of evidentiary value is documented in a report. It is not uncommon for police and fire departments to simply be unresponsive to PIA requests. Within the Office of the Attorney General, there is a PIA ombudsperson, however, appeals to the office can take six or more months to resolve and the decision of the PIA ombudsperson is considered a recommendation, not a mandate upon the holder of the record

5. Adversarial Community Dynamics: The bill’s reliance on resident testimony to evict problem residents’ places undue stress on community relationships. Residents are often reluctant to testify against harassing or dangerous neighbors out of fear for their safety. Consequently, property managers may be unable to act on tenant complaints effectively, fostering frustration and mistrust among residents. This adversarial dynamic discourages community cohesion and drives good tenants to move out due to unresolved issues.

Senate Bill 651 imposes significant and unconstitutional changes to Maryland’s landlord-tenant relationship. It burdens housing providers with logistical, financial, and legal challenges while compromising their ability to manage properties effectively and protect the quiet enjoyment of their residents. MMHA respectfully urges lawmakers to reconsider the far-reaching consequences of this legislation, which risks destabilizing rental communities and creating inequities within the landlord-tenant framework.

For the foregoing reasons, MMHA respectfully requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 651.

**Aaron J. Greenfield, Director of Government Affairs, 410.446.1992**



# **2025 GBCC SB 651 Good Cause Oppose.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ashlie Bagwell

Position: UNF



## **Testimony on behalf of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce**

*In Opposition to*

*Senate Bill 651—Landlord and Tenant—Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies—Local  
Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)*

*February 18, 2025*

*House Environment and Transportation Committee*

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) was founded in 1926. Since then, the organization has grown to more than 600 businesses located throughout the Greater Bethesda area and beyond. On behalf of these members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments in opposition to Senate Bill 651—Landlord and Tenant—Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies—Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).

Senate Bill 651 authorizes a county to enact a local law or ordinance that prohibits a landlord of residential property from failing to renew a lease during the lease period or from terminating a holdover tenancy without good cause. The bill applies to a landlord who owns six or more residential rental units in the State, including any residential rental units that the landlord owns or controls through one or more legal entities.

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce supports housing initiatives, including affordable housing, that balance the needs of property owners and residents. We have concerns that what is proposed in House Bill 709 upsets that balance. For example, the current system prevents escalation of disputes between neighbors by giving the housing provider the flexibility to give a disruptive neighbor a notice to vacate. In the good cause system, the tenant can either ignore or disagree with the cause given, thereby requiring other neighbors to testify in court or sign affidavits against the disruptive tenant. This is particularly troublesome when said tenant is harassing or threatening neighbors.

Additionally, in the good cause system, housing providers can ask prospective tenants for any previous notices to vacate letters with the cause given because that's valuable information about why a tenant was asked to leave a property. If the reason is derogatory, it potentially makes it much harder for a tenant to find housing.

For these and other reasons, we respectfully request an unfavorable vote on Senate Bill 651.

## **2025.02.14 MD Senate Testimony %22Good-Cause Evic**

Uploaded by: Leigh Henry

Position: UNF





Henry Investment Partners

To: The Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Maryland Senate

From: Leigh Henry, [another Apartment Developer leaving Maryland]

Date: February 14, 2025

RE: Senate Bill SB -0651 ["Good-Cause Eviction"]

I feel like this "Good-Cause Eviction" legislation is greatly misunderstood (maybe deliberately) by some politicians looking for no-cost, feel-good legislation and misrepresented by Renters Alliance.

Why would a landlord want to evict a tenant who is paying rent? Or who complies with their obligation under the lease to inform the Landlord about any issues in their unit, especially issues relating to water?

The reason is simple: some renters refuse to follow the rules.

So, if someone wants to party all night (when we don't have staff at the property), their neighbors have a choice: move out or take off work and testify against a neighbor whom they might fear.

The police will not act. They will not issue citations for violations. So, to evict the tenant, someone with actual knowledge must be willing to testify. So, for the tenant who wants a safe, clean, calm place to live, it is easier to just move out. And then that places the Landlord in the position of moving someone else into a terrible situation.

Alternatively, rent-paying tenants could be dealing drugs. Or engaging in prostitution. Or smoking nonstop in a "smoke-free" building. (We have experience with these events – in new Class A buildings).

The Renters Alliance position that Landlords do this to avoid an appliance repair, etc., makes no sense. How will a Landlord re-lease the unit without working appliances? Even an appliance replacement is cheaper than turning a unit. And why doesn't the tenant call DHCA – the number is on the summary sheet to their lease?

The Renters Alliance wants to extend historically reserved for owners to tenants that will enable tenants to hold over without penalties. That violates the contractual and long-established constitutional rights of a landlord.

Always interesting to me that the properties cited for failure to maintain a property always have a heavy percentage of renters receiving vouchers. The County can address issues at these properties through inspections but doesn't. The new thing is some bizarre thing with consumer protection – DHCA has the tools it needs to protect tenants – it just seems like a way to build another bureaucracy so war can be waged against MF managers on many fronts. The state offers free legal representation to tenants who feel they have been singled out. Does this work? It seems like it would be a powerful tool.

It is the most vulnerable who this will hurt as properties become less safe.

This is just one of many increasingly oppressive regulatory schemes targeted at multifamily. The result is that Montgomery County has been “redlined” by lenders and all multifamily developers who we know are no longer willing to develop in Montgomery County. The economic impact on the state and local economy will be significant.

I have been watchfully curious as to whether the Civic Federation supports this. It is yet another piece of legislation that has halted planned, zoned multifamily development in the County while we now focus on AHS or NOW.

When we first started developing in Montgomery County and Gaithersburg, we were flanked by IBM, Lockheed Martin, and the U.S. Humane Society headquarters. It was then the major ***Economic Engine*** for the State of Maryland. But – like like the lead dogs pulling a sleigh in the snow, when they went off course – they pulled the State of Maryland with them.

Now, we are flanked by a solar panel field, an empty office buildings, a half empty adult medical daycare facility, and schools so terrible that our residents move out rather than send their children there.

Montgomery Perspective confirmed this month what we as apartment Developers have seen -- Rent Control has now “Redlined” the County. We have canceled 800 units, and, like our fellow developers, are shifting to Virginia and the Carolinas. That is thousands of construction and permanent jobs, housing units, payroll and tax revenues the County and Maryland won't see – but Virginia will.

Based on the results of the last six years and its *lasting impact on Maryland*, is this the kind of unchecked power that should be given to Montgomery County?

*Leigh Henry*, JD

HIP Projects, LLC

*Germantown Town Center East*

*Watkins Mill Town Center*

*Spectrum at Watkins Mill Town Center*

*Paramount Apartments*

*Majestic Apartments*

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

## Wall Street Landlords Loved These D.C. Suburbs. Rent Control Ended That.

**Montgomery and Prince George's counties limit rent increases to the lower of either 6%, or 3% plus the inflation rate**

*By [Rebecca Picciotto](#) Dec. 23, 2024 5:30 am ET*



An apartment complex in Prince George's County, Md. The county's law restricting rent increases is considered among the strictest in the country. PHOTO: GRAEME SLOAN/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Wall Street's landlords have long embraced two Maryland counties next to Washington, D.C. Multifamily buildings in these suburbs cater to a steady stream of federal employees, making their [rental properties](#) some of the most attractive in the U.S. to institutional investors.

That all changed this summer.

In July, Montgomery County and Prince George's County enacted laws that limit rent increases to either 6%, or 3% plus the inflation rate, whichever is lower.

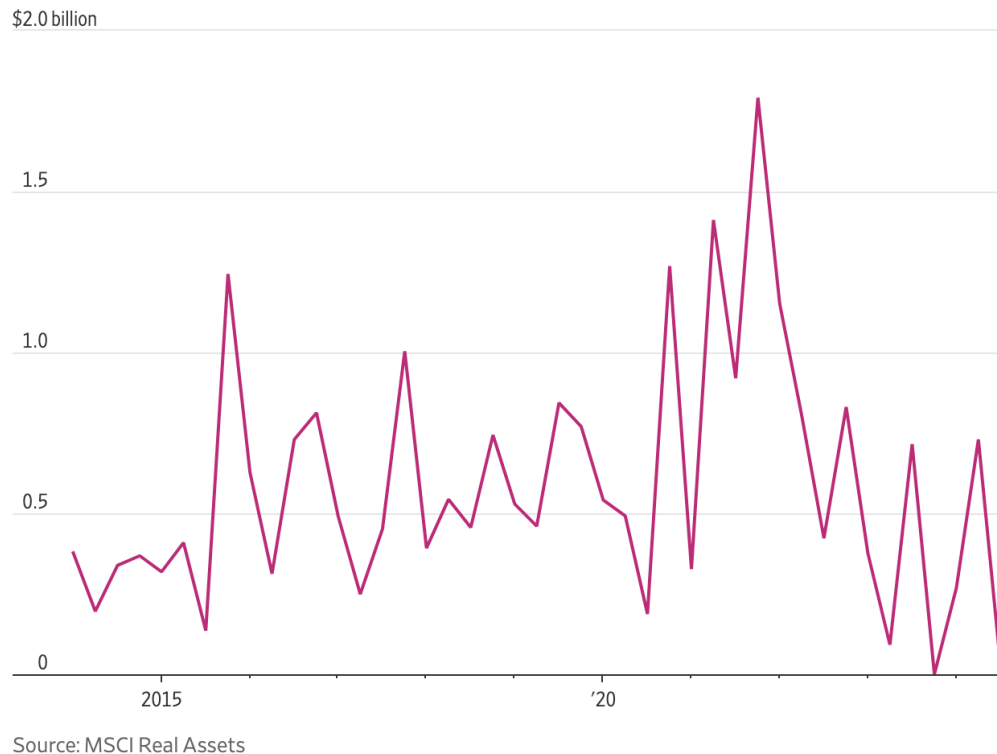
Because the new laws restrict rent increases not just on apartments where tenants are living but also on vacant units, they are considered among the strictest in the country.

Multifamily transaction volume in both counties was down 13% in the first three quarters of 2024 compared with the same period in 2023, according to data from MSCI Real Assets.

“There’s no question that [the rent restrictions] had more than a chilling effect,” said Scott Melnick, president of Montgomery County-based brokerage Melnick Real Estate Advisors.

Apartment owners expect the new legislation will curb their ability to finance redevelopment and upgrades on existing properties, since they don’t know whether they can succeed in getting an exemption.

**Multifamily deal volume in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties**



More than the specific features of the rent laws, institutional investors have been deterred by the perception of a more aggressive regulatory environment and its uncertainties.

“There are so many unanswered questions that right now, everything is really, just truly on pause,” said Christine Espenshade, vice chairman of multifamily capital markets at real-estate firm Newmark.

Many of the country’s largest institutional investors are multifamily owners in the Maryland counties that are now subject to the new rent regulation measures, including [Equity Residential](#), UDR, Starwood Capital Group and Blackstone.

Investors tend to strongly oppose rent restrictions and haven’t welcomed the regulations in Maryland.

“The goal should be creating more units of affordable housing,” said Barry Altshuler, Equity Residential’s executive vice president of investments. “Numerous studies have shown that rent control does not accomplish that goal.”

Elected officials in the Maryland counties are hardly alone in feeling the heat to address housing costs. Nationwide, tenants experienced double-digit rent hikes amid the pandemic.

In July, President Biden called on Congress to pass [national rent control](#) that would force corporate landlords to cap their rent increases at 5% or else forfeit their federal tax breaks. Capitol Hill didn’t adopt that proposal but local jurisdictions [continue to experiment with rent control](#) as voters demand lower housing costs.

Montgomery County Council member Natali Fani-González, who sponsored the county’s new rent law, said she received a flood of phone calls when she took office at the end of 2022. Her constituents were incensed by 15% and 20% rent increases over that year, after pandemic-period rent moratoriums expired. Those increases were roughly in line with the nationwide rise in rents.



Montgomery County Council member Natali Fani-González said her constituents were incensed by 15% and 20% rent increases over 2022.

The Maryland policies include exceptions for some developers and landlords. They don't apply to new construction, for example, and landlords can petition for exemption if they prove their renovation expenses require higher rent hikes.

Even so, these landlords have other worries. President-elect [Donald Trump's proposals to cut the federal workforce](#) could also threaten a key driver of the area's rental demand.

Local real estate outposts are reeling from the drop-off in business. [CBRE Group](#) typically transacts dozens of deals between the two counties each year. This year, it has completed only eight multifamily transactions in Montgomery County and six in Prince George's County, according to the firm's internal data.



**MONTGOMERY**  
**PERSPECTIVE**

# Yup, We're Redlined

February 4, 2025 By Adam Pagnucco.

Every now and then, when I program a post for publishing, I know it's going to throw a rock into the soup. Normally, the splash hits a few local folks and maybe a handful of others around the state.

But my Monday morning post [Has MoCo Been Redlined by the National Real Estate Industry?](#) has gone national.

**And the message is yeah MoCo, you *are* redlined.**

The table was set by my friend Jonathan Robinson, a national political data cruncher and a well-known MoCo housing supporter.

He [posted my column on X](#) and tagged Jay Parsons, the national real estate writer whose account of the multifamily housing industry's conference in Las Vegas formed the basis of my first post.

Here is how Parsons [referred to us](#):

*Regulatory risk is MUCH bigger variable than ever. Some groups are even trying to figure out how to model future regulatory risk that could torpedo pro formas and exit strategies as occurred in places like St. Paul, MN, and Montgomery County, MD. Some coastal cities (LA, SF, OAK, NYC, DC's Maryland suburbs) have been redlined by many institutions that previously favored gateway cities, for both development and acquisitions. "Gateway adjacent" markets (i.e. Orange County, Northern New Jersey) and politically stable suburbs remain favored.*

After Robinson tagged him, Parsons [chimed in](#),

*“Rent control is maybe the most effective NIMBY policy in the world — even with new construction exemptions for reasons noted below, which include real-world examples of developers favoring Northern Virginia over Montgomery County MD b/c of new law.”*



Rent control is maybe the most effective NIMBY policy in the world -- even with new construction exemptions for reasons noted below, which include real-world examples of developers favoring Northern Virginia over Montgomery County MD b/c of new law.



**Jonathan Robinson** @jon\_m\_rob · 4h

Don't just take @jayparsons word for it. @AdamPagnucco got a number of anonymous real estate sources in Montgomery County to offer their assessment of the state of the MFH market here. Damning. [x.com/jon\\_m\\_rob/stat...](https://x.com/jon_m_rob/stat...)

[Show this thread](#)

Source 2: There is a storm brewing on the cumulative impact of all of this and we continue to hear about it from colleagues. These two policies that will either run up the cost of doing business (BEPS) or remove the ease or ability to recoup costs (rent control) are running up against skyrocketing assessments, the specter of property tax increases, and the dramatic rise of homeowners and property insurance... If you are a lender or an investor, these policies do not make Montgomery County a safe harbor for your money when neighboring jurisdictions simply don't include those risks.

to specter of rent and vacancy price controls, and now looking for a second site in Virginia. Reasoning was, "Why have a new but certain schedule of wasting asset in value in 23 years (with a hostile political regime) vs. a clean asset in Virginia?"

Virginia 2, Maryland 0.

\*\*\*\*\*

Source 5: Undeniably, in current environment getting construction loans for apartments is hard. Loans in MoCo are doubly hard. Investor equity for MoCo apartments is impossible. No Va. is the go-to market. MoCo will

energy and environmental standards, stagnant (and higher than preferred) prevailing rents that are depressing tenant demand, and rent control, probably in that order. These problems are not unique to MoCo—except perhaps for rent control and the excessive costs of new energy standards; they exist in most metropolitan areas.

What is unique to MoCo are the unknown future effects of rent control on new projects, the county's continuing lukewarm reception to new development (reflected in difficult entitlement standards, a slower entitlement process than most jurisdictions, a long permitting process), and just recently the unknown future effect of the behavior of the dickens out of them. The recent BEPS regulations add stringent icing onto the now poisoned cake.

The new housing package announced by the county council will do little to mitigate their underlying legislative damage, producing relatively few units on the margins given the existing cumulative layering of multiple, and high, taxes, fees, and regulations enacted by the county this quarter century.

This is a great county. It has much to be proud of. Unfortunately, its political leadership has no idea what they are doing in terms of both short

8:52 AM · Feb 3, 2025 · 7,175 Views



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Of course, Parsons is right. Look no further than [Takoma Park](#), which has seen no new multifamily buildings constructed since it established rent control more than 40 years ago.



Next came Ryan Smyth, the Senior Director of Acquisitions for Stoneweg, an apartment investment firm whose U.S. office is in St. Petersburg, Florida. Smyth [claims to have “personally sourced and closed” more than \\$770 million in assets around the country.](#)

Smyth [wrote](#),

*“As a Swiss investor, we’re looking at the DMV for new multifamily investment. Montgomery County and PG County were immediately crossed off as potential markets for investment. It’s widely known in the industry that both those counties are a no-go going forward.”*

Parsons replied, “Agree with you. They’re basically redlined. When rent control is proposed in a city, developers warn ‘we won’t build’ and advocates recklessly say ‘they’re bluffing.’ And then people wonder what went wrong? Well...”

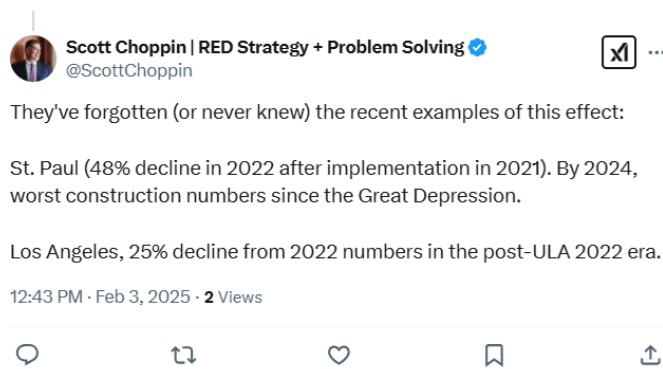


That’s not all. Now comes [Scott Choppin](#), the CEO and Founder of Urban Pacific Group, an urban infill developer based in Long Beach, California. (Urban infill is

what many MoCo politicians say they want.) Choppin [claims to have completed 27 projects with a pipeline of \\$250 million more.](#)

Choppin [wrote,](#)

*“They’ve forgotten (or never knew) the recent examples of this effect: St. Paul (48% decline in 2022 after implementation in 2021). By 2024, worst construction numbers since the Great Depression. Los Angeles, 25% decline from 2022 numbers in the post-ULA 2022 era.”*



See, here’s the thing: our politicians **did** know about St. Paul, where the establishment of rent control drove building activity into nearby Minneapolis, because [I wrote about it months before our rent control law was passed.](#)

As a matter of fact, I wrote more than 20 posts about rent control in the months leading up to the vote and even wrote [a cumulative lessons learned post](#) in case county leaders missed a few. (It happens!) So our leaders knew all about what rent control would do and they approved it anyway.

To their credit, Council Members Gabe Albornoz, Marilyn Balcombe, Andrew Friedson and Dawn Luedtke [voted no.](#) But the rest of them absolutely own the red line that now surrounds us.

Montgomery County’s leadership likes to believe that we are an example for other local jurisdictions. And on this issue, YES WE ARE – but not in a way our leaders might enjoy. The national real estate industry agrees.

# **MBIA Letter of Opposition SB 651 (HB709).pdf**

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: UNF

February 18, 2025

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

**RE: SB651 - Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination Provisions**

Dear Chair Smith:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **SB 651 Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies – Local Good Cause Termination Provisions**. MBIA **Opposes** the Act in its current version.

This bill would authorize any county to adopt by local law or ordinance provisions that would prohibit a landlord of residential property from failing to renew a lease and acknowledges in the text that landlords can have tenants for which a variety of Just Causes can induce a landlord not to renew a lease.

This bill would take away a landlord's rights to exercise their rights under a legal contract agreed to by both parties that is designed to protect landlords from tenants that are unfit for the premises. Furthermore, it places an unfair and potentially expensive burden on landlords and invalidates leases that are legally binding and mutually agreed to.

Lastly, due to the housing shortage, this is a time that we should be encouraging investment in Multi Family Construction. When investors look at projects they look the entirety of the project and the risk involved. The risk includes regulations and other things that make being a landlord difficult in the State of Maryland. For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or [lgraf@marylandbuilders.org](mailto:lgraf@marylandbuilders.org).

cc: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**sb651.pdf**

Uploaded by: Will Vormelker

Position: UNF

HON. STACY A. MAYER  
CIRCUIT COURT  
JUDGE  
BALTIMORE COUNTY  
CHAIR

HON. RICHARD SANDY  
CIRCUIT COURT  
JUDGE  
FREDERICK COUNTY  
VICE-CHAIR



KELLEY O'CONNOR  
ASSISTANT STATE COURT  
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SUZANNE PELZ, ESQ.  
SNR. GOVT. RELATIONS AND  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER  
P: (410)260-1523

## MARYLAND JUDICIAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**FROM:** Legislative Committee  
Suzanne Pelz, Esq.  
(410)260-1523  
**RE:** Senate Bill 651  
Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies  
– Local Good Cause Termination Provisions  
**DATE:** January 29, 2025  
(2/18)  
**POSITION:** Oppose

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The Maryland Judiciary opposes Senate Bill 651. This bill authorizes a county, including Baltimore City, to adopt by local law or ordinance provisions prohibiting a landlord of residential property from failing to renew a lease during the lease period or from terminating a holdover tenancy without good cause.

The District Court is a statewide court system designed to provide the uniform application of law to all who come before it. This bill could cause the Landlord Tenant law to apply differently in one jurisdiction out of twenty-four resulting in an inequitable application of the law across the State. The Judiciary believes there should be statewide consistency and equity in how landlord/tenant cases are processed across Maryland.

cc. Hon. C. Anthony Muse  
Judicial Council  
Legislative Committee  
Kelley O'Connor

# **SB 651\_realtors\_unf.pdf**

Uploaded by: William Castelli

Position: UNF



**Senate Bill 651**– Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies –  
Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

**Position: Unfavorable**

Maryland REALTORS® oppose SB 651 which would authorize local government to pass “Good Cause” eviction laws. This enabling legislation undermines the fundamental nature of leasehold real estate.

Leasehold or rental real estate is a function of both property and contract law. In a leasehold estate, a tenant is given specific property rights like possession for a certain period of time as determined by the parties in a contract (the lease). The leasehold estate is not meant to be permanent and when the lease term ends a landlord may regain possession.

SB 651 removes the certainty of the end of the lease as agreed to by both parties. Unless a landlord exercises certain “Good Cause” reasons to end the lease, the landlord must continue to rent to the tenant for as long as the tenant wants to live there. Although the termination date of the lease will apply to landlords regardless of why a tenant decides to move on, the termination date may not apply to the tenant who will largely be in control of when that lease termination takes place. As long as tenants meet the established criteria set forth in the bill, tenants will not be subject to the lease’s termination date.

Although rental properties subject to HUD regulations already comply with federal “Good Cause” holdover provisions, those provisions exist because the landlord is receiving compensation from the government. As such, the landlord is subject to different HUD rules including different rules on inspection, lease agreements and other matters.

SB 651 will limit landlords’ property rights in their own property and fundamentally alter a leasehold estate. For these reasons, REALTORS® recommend an unfavorable report.

**For more information contact [lisa.may@mdrealtor.org](mailto:lisa.may@mdrealtor.org) or  
[christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org](mailto:christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org)**