

Baltimore City Sheriff's Office

Samuel Cogen, Sheriff

Main Office
The Clarence Mitchell Courthouse
100 N. Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Phone: 410-396-1155
Fax: 410-727-3507



District Court Office
111 N. Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Phone: 410-396-7412
Fax: 410-396-7439

TO: The Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Nicholas T.R. Blendy, Esq., Assistant Sheriff, Baltimore City Sheriff's Office

RE: House Bill 271 – Real Property – Expedited Wrongful Detainer Proceedings – Property for Sale or Lease

DATE: March 5, 2025

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Sheriff's Office (BCSO) **supports** House Bill (HB) 271.

HB 271 establishes an expedited process for wrongful detainer actions if the property that is the subject of the complaint is, at the time of the complaint, advertised for sale or lease or listed for sale or lease.

As drafted, the bill requires that the District Court must immediately summon the person in actual possession of the property to appear before the court at a hearing no more than five days after the filing of the complaint. If the person in actual possession cannot be found, the person authorized to serve process must post an attested copy of the summons conspicuously on the property. The District Court must issue a ruling on the complaint within two days after the hearing. Additionally, if the District Court, or the circuit court in the event of an appeal, rules in favor of the complainant, a warrant of restitution must be issued by the court to the sheriff within 24 hours after the ruling. The sheriff must then immediately execute the warrant.

The BCSO has seen an increase in wrongful detainer actions in calendar year 2024 and has heard anecdotal evidence of an uptick in real property "squatting" cases involving properties listed for sale and/or for lease that appear to be the target focus of HB 271. Because the BCSO are the officers of the court who serve the warrants of restitution in all real property actions in Baltimore City, there is no fiscal impact to the operations of the BCSO under HB 271, as regardless of how quickly an individual successfully works their way through the wrongful detainer process and receives a judgment in their favor and files for a warrant of restitution to effect the judgment, we are responsible for serving it anyway. Because the goal of HB 271 appears to be to provide expedited judicial review while protecting due process for all parties when an individual finds themselves in an unfortunate squatter situation, the BCSO believes this legislation is a significant improvement on the status quo. Should there be a desire to discuss amending the bill for any reason, the BCSO is also very interested in participating in that process, as we believe our expertise in serving these papers may be helpful.

For the foregoing reasons, the BCSO respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 271.