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## HB 59: Property Tax – Tax Sale – Revisions

House Ways and Means Committee Hearing, January 28, 2025

Position: FAVORABLE

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The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a nonprofit public interest law firm that stands with tenants to protect and expand their right to safe, habitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing and their right to fair and equal treatment by Maryland’s landlord-tenant laws, courts, and agencies. The PJC advocates for systemic change to build a just society and remove barriers that impede economic and racial equity.

PJC supports HB 59 and urges the Committee to move favorable. Rather than repeat the testimony of other supporters, PJC will highlight one aspect of the bill that is particularly important for renters: Namely, HB 59 will require that the tax sale purchaser provide any occupants, including renters, at least 90 days’ notice of a pending eviction. Current law only provides for 30 days’ notice. This is insufficient because this is often the only notice that renters may receive that a tax sale foreclosure is complete, the right to redeem is foreclosed, and eviction is imminent. Prior to this notice, renters may be aware that a tax sale is pending, but the owner could always redeem the property prior to foreclosure of the right to redeem. Accordingly, providing renters at least 90 days’ notice that they must move, especially when finding replacement affordable housing is extremely challenging, will further housing stability for Maryland’s renting families.

Maryland law currently provides renters in mortgage foreclosures with at least 90 days’ notice. HB 59 provides for parity for renters in the tax sale foreclosure process.

Additionally, HB 59 changes the method for delivery of the 90-day notice to first-class mail with certificate of mailing, which is much more likely to be received by the renting family than certified mail in our experience.

Public Justice Center urges you to **move favorable on HB 59**. If you have any questions, please contact Matt Hill, hillm@publicjustice.org (410) 625-9409 Ext. 229.