

Tuesday, February 24, 2026



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) 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 are also working in collaboration with CASA de Maryland, an immigration advocacy and assistance organization based in Maryland, as well as Renters United. I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am testifying **in support of HB774 - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**.

HB774 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for corporate 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.

This bill specifically exempts small landlords who own five units or fewer. This is because it is the large, corporate landlords have been abusing the system and vulnerable Marylanders renting housing from them. Moreover, this bill is only providing counties with options; it places the decision of whether just cause eviction legislation is appropriate in the hands of the county, which has a greater depth of understanding of their individual communities' needs.

The real estate lobby wants you to believe that allowing local counties to bar unjustified evictions will somehow damage the availability of affordable housing. This is baseless fearmongering. Recent research examining the impact of "just cause eviction" legislation in three states showed that such laws did not reduce the rate of new housing

production/supply.¹ Real estate interests have previously convinced this committee to add amendments to this bill that force localities to choose between rent stabilization and good cause eviction laws on the baseless premise that having both will cause decreased capacity. There is no evidence of this. On the other hand, we know for a fact that families need both stable rents and stable homes to remain housed.

Causeless evictions are a frequent tool of corporate real estate investors trying to enable unconscionable rent increases. Individuals and families who have done nothing wrong are forced to uproot their entire lives as a result. Cause-less evictions are also used to target “undesirable” tenants such as those using housing vouchers or who try to organize or demand repairs. It is virtually impossible for even those tenants who are being unlawfully discriminated against to prevent their eviction, given that the housing court docket is designed for efficiency and does not allow the kind of discovery available in larger lawsuits.

Maryland families who pay their rent and play by the rules deserve to stay in their homes. The General Assembly can help ensure that by allowing counties which see a need for good cause eviction legislation to pass it. For these reasons, I am asking you to pass a **clean version of HB774 - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**, without any developer-approved amendments intended to diminish its effects.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
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Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore

¹ Kenton Card, Evan Davis, Edward Goetz, and Jeremy Schwartz. *The Good Case for “Good Cause”: Do Good Cause eviction protections reduce the rate of housing production?* Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, March 3, 2025. https://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.umn.edu/files/2025-03/final_the-good-case-for-_good-cause-v2.pdf