

Hearing: February 26, 2026
Jo Shifrin
Bethesda, MD 20817

TESTIMONY ON HB# 774 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Valderamma, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and members of the Economic Matters 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 HB 774, 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 11 years. 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. 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, landlords can refuse to give a reason when not renewing a lease. More than 30,000 households are expected to face eviction and more than 5,000 families are made homeless each year. This creates fear and makes tenants uncomfortable asking landlords and property managers to make repairs when their homes require work or are even uninhabitable.

HB 774 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 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.

This legislation strikes a thoughtful balance between protecting tenants from arbitrary displacement and preserving landlords' legitimate rights. Under HB 774, landlords will be allowed to terminate or decline to renew a lease when a tenant engages in disorderly or illegal conduct, refuses lawful access to the property, or otherwise violates the terms of the lease.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 774.