



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
CHARLES COUNTY DELEGATION

March 10, 2026

Dear Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present local **House Bill 1497 – Rent Stabilization**. My name is Delegate Debra Davis, and I write on behalf of the Charles County Delegation to respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1497.

House Bill 1497 is intended to provide Charles County local jurisdictions with the ability to protect senior residents from excessive rent increases while still allowing flexibility for local decision-making. The goal of this legislation is to ensure that seniors on fixed incomes are not priced out of the communities where they have lived, worked, and contributed for decades.

Since the introduction of this bill, our office has had productive conversations with stakeholders in Charles County, including the Charles County Commissioners and local business owners. In your files you will find a letter of support from the Charles County Commissioners and Charles County Delegations. Based on that feedback, we have worked collaboratively to incorporate amendments that address their concerns while preserving the core intent of the legislation.

Specifically, the amendments submitted today make the following changes:

- **Page 1, Line 3:** Strike “requiring” and substitute “**authorizing.**”
This change clarifies that the bill is **enabling legislation**, allowing local jurisdictions the discretion to implement rent stabilization measures rather than mandating them statewide.
- **Page 2, Line 6:** Strike “**occupied**” and substitute “**leased.**”
This amendment ensures that the rent increase limitation applies specifically to **seniors who are the lessee of a residential unit**, rather than an individual who may simply be residing in the unit but is not the leaseholder.

- **Page 2, Line 7:** Strike “shall” and substitute “may.”
This change further reinforces the enabling nature of the legislation by providing jurisdictions with flexibility in determining whether to adopt the provisions.
- **Page 2, Line 9:** After “Index” insert “plus 3%.”
This allows for reasonable rent increases tied to inflation while still providing meaningful protections for seniors.

These amendments reflect a good-faith effort to address concerns raised by local leaders and members of the business community while maintaining the bill’s central purpose: protecting seniors from sudden and unaffordable rent increases.

By making this legislation enabling and clarifying that it applies to the senior leaseholder, we believe the bill now strikes a more balanced approach between tenant protections and property owner considerations.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Committee for a **favorable report on local House Bill 1497 with the proposed amendments.**

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Delegate Debra Davis, Esq.
Chair, Charles County Delegation