



**House Bill 59** – Real Property - Expedited Wrongful Detainer Proceedings - Property for Sale or Lease

**Position: Support**

Maryland REALTORS® supports HB 59, which expedites wrongful detainer court actions in cases where there is fraudulent occupancy, informally known as “squatting.”

Wrongful detainer actions are filed against persons holding possession of property for which they have no legal claim. HB 59 would establish an expedited court hearing process for property that is listed or advertised for sale or lease or listed on a multiple listing service. The bill also provides an expedited appeal process and a required timeline for court decisions to be made.

HB 59 helps thwart scammers that illegally occupy a residence listed for sale or lease. Sometimes a property is listed by the scammer in a separate advertisement, and other times the scammer occupies a property that they know is vacant and creates fraudulent records that make it difficult for a police officer to make informed decisions on rightful ownership and ultimately expel them for trespass.

It is imperative that a court make a quick decision in these cases to return possession of the property back to the rightful owner and help them mitigate any financial losses. The quicker these cases are resolved by the court, the sooner the police may act against the person committing fraud as well.

For these reasons, Maryland REALTORS® recommends a favorable report.

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