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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 774**  
**Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause**  
**Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**  
*Economic Matters Committee*  
**February 26, 2026**

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports HB 774**, which would authorize counties to adopt and enforce rules prohibiting landlords from failing to renew a lease and/or terminating a holdover tenancy without a valid reason (“good cause”). This bill provides local jurisdictions the ability to create and use a tool to reduce Maryland’s staggeringly high eviction rates, sparing Marylanders struggling with increased unaffordability from housing insecurity and its effects.

**Maryland has had the highest rate of eviction filings in the United States.** The total number of evictions filed in Maryland between 2000-2017 was over 10 million – more than one-quarter of all the evictions filed in the U.S. over those years, and more than the evictions filed in New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, DC, New Jersey, Virginia, and California *combined*.<sup>i</sup>

**Maryland’s current law allows landlords to remove tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason.** In FY 2025, Maryland landlords filed nearly 5,000 “no-cause” or “tenant holding over” evictions: a 42% increase since 2019.<sup>ii</sup> Allowing landlords to evict tenants without cause fosters fear of retaliation and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. Enabling jurisdictions to pass good cause laws would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination.

**Evictions inflict profound harm on families and communities**, putting Marylanders at risk of experiencing homelessness, hospitalization, increased debt, and lifelong financial insecurity.<sup>iii</sup> During the COVID-19 eviction moratorium, there was a significant reduction in rates of homelessness in Maryland, but since then, there has been a 56% increase in the number of evictions in Maryland from 2023 to 2024 and the number of Marylanders experiencing homelessness has correspondingly risen.<sup>iv</sup> HB 774 can reduce the number of eviction proceedings to only those with good cause.

**Black students and households are disproportionately harmed by eviction.** In 2020, Black-headed households were three times more likely than White households in Baltimore to be evicted.<sup>v</sup> Research shows landlords are more likely to seek punitive action against tenants who live in communities of color.<sup>vi</sup> While racially based housing discrimination is already illegal under Maryland law<sup>vii</sup> and federal law<sup>viii</sup>, the burden of proof falls on the victim, who would be experiencing eviction. This racial disparity falls unevenly on Black children, whose families are almost twice as likely to be evicted, compared to families with white children.<sup>ix</sup> Eviction lowers the likelihood of graduating high school by 12.5 percentage points.<sup>x</sup>

Furthermore, children of families experiencing eviction are 20% more likely to change schools and 34% more likely to repeat a year in school.<sup>xi</sup> Children are disproportionately impacted by the harmful effects of eviction. By preventing unwarranted housing instability, **HB 774 helps promote children’s educational stability and success.**

**Good cause eviction has been implemented in other states.** Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.<sup>xii</sup> A study on four California cities found that the cities that passed good cause eviction laws had lower eviction cases and eviction filing rates than the ones that did not, proving this legislation is an effective no-cost strategy to reducing unjust evictions.<sup>xiii</sup>

**We urge a favorable report of HB 774 as a necessary step towards reducing housing insecurity broadly, empowering individuals’ rights to just evictions, and reducing racial bias in eviction processes.** Many of us work directly with communities impacted by eviction as they struggle to locate housing, provide for their families, and meet their basic needs. HB 774 is essential towards ensuring individuals’ rights against unjust evictions.

*Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.*

<sup>i</sup> Gromis, A., Fellows, I., Hendrickson, J.R., Edmonds, L., Leung, L., Porton, A., & Desmond, M. (2022). Estimating eviction prevalence across the United States, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* 119 (21) e2116169119, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2116169119>.

<sup>ii</sup> “ROOTED IN MARYLAND.” 2025. Renters United Maryland. <https://rentersunitedmaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/RUMGood-Cause-1-pager-2.7.pdf>.

<sup>iii</sup> Collinson, Robert, John Eric Humphries, Nicholas Mader, Davin Reed, Daniel Tannenbaum, and Winnie van Dijk. 2024. “Eviction and Poverty in American Cities\*.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 139 (1): 57–120. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjad042>

<sup>iv</sup> District Court of Maryland Eviction Case Data | Open Data | Opendata.Maryland.Gov.” n.d. Accessed February 9, 2025. [https://opendata.maryland.gov/Housing/District-Court-of-Maryland-Eviction-Case-Data/mvqb-b4hf/about\\_data](https://opendata.maryland.gov/Housing/District-Court-of-Maryland-Eviction-Case-Data/mvqb-b4hf/about_data).

<sup>v</sup> Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Division of Just Communities. (2024). *Separate and unequal neighborhoods: A baseline report for the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Division of Just Communities*. Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Just-Communities/Documents/Baseline-Report.pdf>

<sup>vi</sup> Campa, Elijah A. de la, and Vincent J. Reina. 2023. “Landlords’ Rental Businesses before and after the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from a National Cross-Site Survey.” *Journal of Housing Economics* 59 (March):101904. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhe.2022.101904>.

<sup>vii</sup> Md. Code § 20-101, 20-704, 20–705

<sup>viii</sup> 42 U.S. Code § 3601

<sup>ix</sup> Kathryn M. Leifheit, et al. (2020). Eviction in Early Childhood and Neighborhood Poverty, Food Security, and Obesity in Later Childhood and Adolescence: Evidence from a Longitudinal Birth Cohort. *Science Direct* Vol. 11, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352827320300331?via%3Dihub.z>

<sup>x</sup> Collinson, R., Dutz, D., Humphries, J.E., Mader, N., Tannenbaum, D., & van Dijk, W. (2025). The Effects of Eviction on Children. Yale Tobin Center for Economic Policy. <https://tobin.yale.edu/research/effects-eviction-children>

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xii</sup> “ROOTED IN MARYLAND.” 2025. Renters United Maryland. <https://rentersunitedmaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/RUMGood-Cause-1-pager-2.7.pdf>.

<sup>xiii</sup> Cuellar, J. (2019). Effect of “Just Cause” Eviction Ordinances on Eviction in Four California Cities. *Journal of Public & International Affairs*. <https://jpia.princeton.edu/news/effect-just-cause-eviction-ordinances-eviction-four-california-cities>