



CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Acting County Administrator

March 12, 2026

Bill: House Bill 1497 Charles County – Rent Stabilization – Seniors
Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS
Committee: House Economic Matters

Dear Chairwoman Valderrama, Vice Chairwoman Charkoudian and Members:

On behalf of the County Commissioners for Charles County, this letter is to express support for House Bill 1497 Charles County - Rent Stabilization – Seniors, with requested amendments.

Older residents of Charles County are particularly vulnerable to rising housing costs. Many of our seniors depend on Social Security benefits and retirement savings that have not increased at the same pace as housing costs in our area. Because of this, they cannot absorb housing increases without impacting necessities, such as food and medication purchases. In the absence of safeguards like those proposed in HB 1497, significant rent increases can quickly place safe and stable housing out of reach for many of our older neighbors.

HB 1497 links allowable rent increases to the Consumer Price Index, which provides a balanced and predictable approach. By following a known public inflation measure, HB 1497 allows landlords to adjust rents based upon a transparent benchmark and not their own whims. Further, Social Security and pensions often rise with CPI cost-of-living adjustments, so the limitations on rent increases will be consistent with broader financial trends and ensure that seniors are protected from sudden or excessive increases that could force them from their homes.

When we think about quality of life in our community, access to affordable housing is a critical factor that allows our older residents to more readily maintain their health and independence. The disruption caused when seniors are forced to relocate due to rising rents can negatively affect their physical and emotional well-being and place additional strain on community support resources, as we combat displacement and potential homelessness.

HB1497 is a targeted solution that will assist our residents 62 years of age and older by allowing them to remain in their homes while maintaining fairness for property owners.

The County Commissioners of Charles County request two amendments to the bill as written. First, we would ask that the bill be enabling in order to allow the Commissioners to pass a local law to establish further details on the rent stabilization program consistent with HB 1497. Secondly, we request a minor wording change to capture residents intended to benefit from the rent increase cap are those who are party to a residential lease agreement, and not merely an occupant in a rented residential unit. The redline bill is enclosed for your reference.

For the reasons stated herein, we encourage a FAVORABLE report on HB 1497 with the attached amendments. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.', with a stylized, flowing script.

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President
County Commissioners of Charles County

Enclosure

cc: Charles County Delegation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Charles County – Rent Stabilization – Seniors**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring Charles County to establish a rent increase limit for units
4 occupied by seniors; and generally relating to rent stabilization for seniors in Charles
5 County.

6 BY adding to
7 Article – Real Property
8 Section 8–209.2
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
12 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

13 **Article – Real Property**

14 **8–209.2.**

15 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**
16 **INDICATED.**

17 **(2) “BASE RENT” MEANS THE RENT IN EFFECT UNDER THE CURRENT**
18 **LEASE.**

19 **(3) “CONSUMER PRICE INDEX” MEANS THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX**
20 **FOR ALL URBAN CONSUMERS FOR THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA, OR**
21 **ANY SUCCESSOR INDEX.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

sb0953

1 (4) “RENT INCREASE LIMIT” MEANS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE
2 AMOUNT THAT A LANDLORD MAY INCREASE THE RENT OF A RENTAL UNIT RELATIVE
3 TO THE BASE RENT.

4 (5) “SENIOR” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS AT LEAST 62 YEARS OLD.

5 (B) THIS SECTION APPLIES ONLY IN CHARLES COUNTY.

6 (C) THE COUNTY ~~MAYSHALL~~ ESTABLISH BY LOCAL LAW AN ANNUAL RENT
INCREASE LIMIT FOR RENTAL UNITS ~~OCCUPIED-LEASED~~ BY A SENIOR BASED
ON THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX.

7 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
9 October 1, 2026.

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