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TESTIMONY ON HB774 - FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Smith, and members of the Economic Matters Committee

My name is Carol Stern from Chevy Chase in District 16 and I am a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda. I am providing this testimony in support of HB774. Our Jewish tradition's primary concern regarding landlord-tenant relations is the question of permanence. Our tradition teaches us that landlords are forbidden from evicting tenants without due warning and may not evict tenants during the winter months, when new housing will be hard to find. According to the great Jewish sage and philosopher, Moses Maimonides, a landlord must give the tenant sufficient notice before terminating a lease “so that the tenant can look for another place and will not be abandoned in the street”. The landlord, Maimonides suggests, will be held responsible if a tenant becomes homeless as the result of eviction. These are the values that I bring when asking you to support this Good Cause Eviction bill.

Nobody should lose their home because of the whims of their landlord. Landlords often retaliate against tenants who organize for their rights, demand that repairs be made, or complain about violations of laws about safe housing conditions. Sometimes this retaliation takes the form of refusing to renew their leases. “Good cause” laws protect tenants from this kind of retaliation, and from being evicted for no reason at all. These laws promote housing stability for tenants and neighborhoods. **This bill would allow counties to adopt “good cause” laws that meet local needs and my county, Montgomery County, is ready to adopt this law.**

Every person, regardless of race or income, should have a safe and stable home. But some greedy landlords think that their own profit is more important than safety and stability for black and brown renters, and they let the buildings they own fall into disrepair, or throw whole families out on the street to try to squeeze more money out of the next renters.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB774.