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**HB 080 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Fee Disclosures**  
**House Economic Matters Committee**  
**Feb. 5, 2026**  
**Position: Favorable**

The Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland (“PBRC”), an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is the statewide thought leader and clearinghouse for pro bono civil legal services in Maryland. As the designated pro bono arm of the MSBA, PBRC provides training, mentorship, and pro bono service opportunities to members of the private bar and offers direct legal services to over 5,000 clients annually.

In May 2017, with a grant from the Maryland Judiciary’s Access to Justice Department, PBRC launched the **Tenant Volunteer Lawyer of the Day (TVLD) Program, now called the Tenant Justice Program**, in Baltimore City Rent Court to provide day-of-court legal representation to tenants who appear unrepresented for their proceedings. Since then, this continually expanding Program has allowed PBRC staff and volunteer attorneys to represent thousands of low-income tenants in both Baltimore City and Baltimore County in multiple types of legal actions that could result in eviction.

**HB 80, by essentially requiring a landlord to provide in writing an itemized list of all fees, their basis and the amount, simply addresses a matter of basic fairness.** A lease is a form of a contract. The fundamental principles of contract law provide for a “meeting of the minds,” or for the parties to mutually understand the agreement and the obligations it imposes on them. This is impossible when fees are not stated up front, nor when they are buried in lengthy contracts designed to obscure them. Without an understanding of what a rental truly costs, prospective tenants are unable to meaningfully determine whether they can afford a particular rental unit.

Low-income tenants such as those we serve will suffer the most from hidden fees. This is not a minor concern given the housing shortage and that wages have not kept pace with skyrocketing rents. In Baltimore County, over half of tenants spend 30% or more of their income on rent, with one in four spending more than 50% of their income on rent.<sup>1</sup>

Notably, HB 80 does not prohibit landlords from *charging* these fees. They may still charge fees above and beyond base rent, whether or not they are directly related and/or proportional to any expense incurred by the landlord. Indeed, we have seen fees imposed for things like paying rent online and nebulous “administrative fees” that seem to have no basis in costs actually incurred. This bill simply requires that those fees be disclosed. **HB 80 provides an important consumer protection measure for tenants in this regard without infringing whatsoever on what the landlord may charge.**

We are pleased to see the inclusion of a private right of action for tenants who are wrongfully charged mandatory fees. This enforcement mechanism should incentivize landlords to comply with the law, given that they stand to lose up to three times the money they wrongfully gained. HB 80 represents a common-sense protection for tenants in the face of an increasingly difficult rental market

For the above reasons,  
**PBRC urges a FAVORABLE report on HB 80.**  
Please contact Katie Davis, Director of PBRC’s Courtroom Advocacy Project, with any questions.  
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<sup>1</sup> Bansil, Sapna, and Rona Kobell. “Most Baltimore County Renters Struggle to Afford Housing.” The Banner, 29 Jan. 2026, [www.thebanner.com/baltimore-county/baltimore-county-rent-census-AKY3IZT5RZD3NBBZ6C4VQIS24M/](http://www.thebanner.com/baltimore-county/baltimore-county-rent-census-AKY3IZT5RZD3NBBZ6C4VQIS24M/). Accessed 30 Jan. 2026.  
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