



## TESTIMONY

### HB0434 Residential Leases – Use of Algorithmic Device by Landlord to Determine Rent, Occupancy, or Lease Terms

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Palakovich-Carr

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, Co-Chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB0434 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of activists—individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Marylanders are already struggling with high housing costs, and the last thing renters need is landlords using algorithmic tools to push prices even higher. In 2025, the Attorney General filed suit against RealPage for using software that encourages coordinated rent increases. National reporting has shown that these anticompetitive algorithms cost renters billions of dollars, with tenants in buildings using this software paying significantly more than they would in a competitive market.

HB0434 strengthens and expands last year’s bill by prohibiting landlords from using algorithmic devices not only to set rent, but also to determine **occupancy levels** and **lease terms**. These tools allow landlords to feed in nonpublic, competitively sensitive data—such as the number of prospective tenant visits—to generate prices and conditions designed to maximize revenue, not fairness. This is price-setting by algorithm, and it has no place in Maryland’s housing market.

Our members are appalled at the grift and deeply concerned about the growing role of opaque, profit-driven algorithms in determining where people can live and what they must pay. HB0434 closes loopholes, strengthens consumer protections, and helps ensure that Maryland renters are not being squeezed by software designed to inflate profits at their expense.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.