

SHANEKA HENSON  
Legislative District 30  
Anne Arundel County

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on Children,  
Youth, and Families



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
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**SPONSOR TESTIMONY**

**April 2, 2026**

**Senate Bill 0941 – Department of Housing and Community Development  
Severe Health and Safety Risk Properties – Intervention Plan**

Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian and Economic Matter Committee Members

For the record, I am Senator Shaneka Henson, representing District 30 in Anne Arundel County and thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 0941 – *Department of Housing and Community Development – Severe Health and Safety Risk Properties – Intervention Plan*. We accept and support the amendments approved in HB1218 and request a favorable vote of the committee for SB941 to include the conforming amendments.

SB0941 directs the Department of Housing and Community Development’s Office of Landlord and Tenant Affairs, in consultation with the Attorney General, to identify state-funded rental properties that pose severe health and safety risks and to submit an action plan and recommendations by August 31, 2027.

The bill creates clear legal definitions to ensure consistent enforcement. It defines a “severe health and safety risk property” as one that repeatedly fails to meet basic standards, including chronic code violations, recurring hazardous conditions, and ongoing failure to remediate. These definitions establish objective criteria and reduce inconsistent application of enforcement tools.

SB0941 also requires the Office of Landlord and Tenant Affairs and the Attorney General to develop an intervention plan grounded in existing law, ensuring that identification and remediation efforts align with current enforcement authority and hold up under judicial review.

The bill does not impose automatic penalties. Instead, it offers a range of targeted interventions proportional to the severity and persistence of violations—such as financial consequences, corrective action plans, required inspections, remediation timelines, and, when necessary, legal actions.

This graduated approach ties enforcement to documented patterns of noncompliance, safeguarding due process. It also reinforces the role of judicial oversight by clearly framing when injunctive relief and other court-based remedies are appropriate.

Tenant protection is a key priority. Potential interventions include tenant escrows, pest eradication plans, structural repairs, and temporary relocation when units are unsafe. These measures are coordinated to ensure a fair, legally sound response.

To ensure transparency, the Department must submit its intervention plan and proposed statutory changes by a set deadline. A sunset provision allows the General Assembly to evaluate outcomes before making permanent changes.

SB0941 ultimately provides a measured, legally sound framework for addressing severe health and safety failures in rental housing, strengthening oversight, promoting proportional remedies, and protecting vulnerable tenants living in these units.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 941.