



Testimony - HB 80, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Fee Disclosures
Favorable

House Economic Matters Committee

February 5, 2026

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Honorable Chairwoman Valderrama & Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

Our members are the workers who keep Maryland running—educators, school staff, nonprofit workers, public servants, and university employees. Increasingly, they are being priced out of the very communities they serve. Housing costs are rising faster than wages, and for too many working families, rent has become unpredictable, unstable, and unaffordable.

House Bill 80 addresses a critical and often overlooked driver of housing insecurity: the explosion of mandatory, undisclosed, and junk fees that inflate the real cost of rent. While advertised rent may appear manageable, tenants routinely discover after the fact that additional required fees—charged monthly or periodically—push housing well beyond their budget. This practice undermines transparency and erodes trust, and it disproportionately harms low- and moderate-income workers.

SEIU Local 500 strongly supports HB 80 because it brings honesty and accountability into the rental market. By requiring clear, upfront disclosure of all mandatory fees and prohibiting landlords from imposing undisclosed charges, this bill ensures that tenants can make informed decisions about where they live and what they can truly afford.

However, we also want to be clear: fee disclosure alone is not enough. The growing reliance on fees is a symptom of a larger problem—unchecked rent increases and the absence of meaningful rent stabilization measures. When landlords are free to raise

rents without guardrails, fees become another tool to extract more from tenants while skirting public scrutiny. HB 80 is an important step toward transparency, but it must be paired with broader rent stabilization policies if Maryland is serious about creating and preserving affordable housing.

The bill's authorization for local jurisdictions to adopt stronger protections is especially important. It preserves local authority to respond to housing crises with tools that reflect community needs, including rent stabilization and anti-gouging measures. Workers should not have to choose between paying rent and meeting basic needs, nor should they be forced out of their communities due to unpredictable housing costs.

SEIU Local 500 urges the committee to advance HB 80 as part of a broader commitment to housing justice—one that recognizes transparency, tenant protections, and rent stabilization as essential components of a fair and functional housing system.

We urge a favorable report and thank Delegate Vogel for leading on this important issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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