



**Before the Economic Matters Committee
HB774 – Good Cause Eviction
SUPPORT**

Chair Valderamma, Vice-chair Charkoudian and Members of the Economic Matters Committee –

On behalf of the Interfaith Works Board of Directors, I submit this testimony in strong support of HB774 - a Bill that would help hardworking individuals and families remain in their homes by preventing eviction without good cause, and preventing retaliation when renters use appropriate means to report issues that make their rented homes unsafe.

For the past 53 years, Interfaith Works has been serving Montgomery County residents experiencing homelessness and poverty. This includes working with 3,000 people a year who are living on the streets, staying in one of our four shelters, or living throughout the County with financial assistance and the ongoing support of our dedicated case managers. Over the past several years Interfaith Works' focus has expanded to include workforce development, emergency financial assistance, and referral to healthcare and financial resources – all to ensure people remain stably housed, instead of losing their homes and requiring more extensive and resource-intensive services.

The goal of HB774 is one we can all support – ensuring fair treatment of renters. We all know a housing crisis exists in Maryland, and by far the most heavily impacted are low-income renters. It is not only morally right, but also fiscally sound practice, to keep people in stable housing. This Bill would make sure individuals and families can't be evicted from their homes without legitimate cause. Defining and operationalizing what constitutes Good Cause also protects landlords by ensuring their actions are enforceable when they follow the law.

Simply put, HB774 embodies three sound, ethical practices:

- It prevents the arbitrary displacement of renters by requiring landlords to cite cause for non-renewal of leases**
- It protects renters from retaliation when they report unsafe conditions**
- It defines “Good Cause” justification for non-renewal of a lease – including things like lease breaches, non-payment, illegal activity, the need of a landlord to reclaim a property for personal use etc.**

In its 53 years working to support the most vulnerable residents of Montgomery County, we have seen economic conditions rise and fall, but we have never experienced the level of disrespect and outright attack on Federal workers, people living at or below the poverty line, and the most vulnerable currently directed by the Federal government. Economic times are difficult, but the level of anxiety and fear is unprecedented in recent times. Ensuring that renters are protected from unreasonable and unjustified eviction can send a

powerful message that in Maryland we believe everyone matters. On behalf of the Interfaith Works Board of Directors I respectfully urge the Economic Matters Committee to issue a favorable report on HB774.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Lynne Harris
Interfaith Works Board of Directors**