

# Baltimore City Sheriff's Office

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TO: The Honorable Members of the House Economic Matters and House Judiciary Committees

FROM: Nicholas T.R. Blendy, Esq., Assistant Sheriff, Baltimore City Sheriff's Office

RE: House Bill 59 – Real Property – Expedited Wrongful Detainer Proceedings – Property for Sale or Lease

DATE: February 5, 2026

## POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Committees, please accept this **letter of information** from the Baltimore City Sheriff's Office for House Bill (HB) 59.

HB 59 establishes an expedited process for wrongful detainer actions if the property that is the subject of the complaint is, at the time of the complaint, advertised for sale or lease or listed for sale or lease.

As drafted, the bill requires that the District Court must immediately summon the person in actual possession of the property to appear before the court at a hearing no more than five days after the filing of the complaint. If the person in actual possession cannot be found, the person authorized to serve process must post an attested copy of the summons conspicuously on the property. The District Court must issue a ruling on the complaint within two days after the hearing. Additionally, if the District Court, or the circuit court in the event of an appeal, rules in favor of the complainant, a warrant of restitution must be issued by the court to the sheriff within 24 hours after the ruling. The sheriff must then immediately execute the warrant.

In calendar year 2024, the BCSO saw an increase in wrongful detainer actions and heard anecdotal evidence of an uptick in real property "squatting" cases involving properties listed for sale and/or for lease that appear to be the target focus of HB 59. During the 2025 legislative session of the General Assembly, the BCSO supported then 2025 House Bill 271, which is in the same posture as the bill before you. What has changed is that last session, the General Assembly enacted Chapter 188 (Senate Bill 46) of the Laws of Maryland of 2025, which created a different expedited process for wrongful detainer actions, which has only now been in place since the effective date of October 1, 2025. The BCSO believes it would be prudent to wait for at least one year's worth of data before considering any new alterations to the wrongful detainer statute.

The BCSO remains very cognizant of the challenges surrounding wrongful detainer cases, and the squatter cases that are a subset thereof. We appreciate Delegate Addison's leadership on working to attempt to

improve the process in a way that provides relief to impacted homeowners and communities from wrongful behavior within real property, while considering the due process rights of all parties involved in these cases. However, for the foregoing reasons, the BCSO believes it may be worthwhile for the General Assembly to consider not altering the new expedited process for wrongful detainer cases until the changes made during the last legislative session have at least a full year's worth of data to absorb and consider before making any changes to the timeline process.

The BCSO thanks you for considering this **letter of information** on HB 59.