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**TESTIMONY ON HB0059 - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE**

**Real Property - Expedited Wrongful Detainer Proceedings - Property for Sale or Lease**

**TO:** Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and members of the Economic Matters Committee

**FROM:** Deedee Jacobsohn, on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ)

My name is Deedee Jacobsohn. I am a resident of District 16. **I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ) in opposition to HB0059, Real Property - Expedited Wrongful Detainer Proceedings - Property for Sale or Lease.** JUFJ organizes over 6,000 Jews and allies from across Maryland in support of social, racial, and economic justice campaigns at the state and local levels.

Jewish law insists that everybody deserves safe and stable housing. In a discussion of landlord-tenant relations in the *Mishneh Torah*, a code of Jewish law written in the 12th century, Maimonides discusses when a landlord can evict a tenant. The code asserts that the landlord must provide notification “in advance, so that he [the tenant] can look for another place and will not be homeless (*Mishneh Torah*, Hiring 6].

Last year, the General Assembly passed SB 46 which requires the court to hear “wrongful detainer” cases within 10 days. The proposed HB 59 cuts that time in half. Tenants accused of squatting would have almost no time to find legal counsel, much less prepare a defense. Depriving renters of due process and legal counsel will result in more evictions and homelessness. Vulnerable renters—victims of domestic abuse, disabled renters, or those who complain about substandard conditions, are more likely to be accused of squatting and could find themselves evicted without ever having received notice of a claim.

Squatting is already a crime, and law enforcement already has the ability to address unlicensed landlords who offer fraudulent leases. At a time when we daily see the dangers of ignoring due process, of acting first and asking questions later, we in Maryland need to do a better job of upholding the right to a fair legal process, especially for vulnerable renters.

**On behalf of JUFJ, I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on HB0059.**