



HB 774 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

Hearing before the House Economic Matters Committee, Feb. 26, 2026

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

Santoni, Vocci & Ortega, LLC is part of Renters United Maryland and urges the House Economic Matters Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 774.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Yet, in FY 2025, landlords filed 4,462 “no cause” or “tenant holding over” eviction cases – a 42% increase since 2019. HB 774 would allow local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws and prevent families from being evicted unless a corporate landlord provides a legitimate reason. We urge the Committee to pass a clean HB 774 and reject poison pill amendments that would force counties and renters to choose between having strong rent stabilization and good cause eviction protections. This is a false choice. We need stable rents and stable homes.

Santoni, Vocci & Ortega, LLC is a private tenants’ rights firm, representing tenants living in uninhabitable conditions, or have been the subject of an illegal eviction or debt collection violations. We often see many tenants who are afraid of speaking up about terrible living conditions or illegal debt collection practices because they fear retaliation from their landlord. This is especially true for our most vulnerable populations, including the elderly.

Good Cause is essential to affordable housing. Nothing is more costly to families than eviction – moving expenses, finding a new home with few options, transferring schools in the middle of the year. [Every dollar spent on eviction prevention returns \\$2.39 to the state from reduced social safety net costs related to homelessness.](#)

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Researchers from Loyola University Maryland and others found that [Good Cause has no impact on housing development](#) after examining how Good Cause works in NH, OR, & CA. Some of these jurisdictions have rent stabilization; some do not. It does not matter.

Please reject any poison pill amendment that forces renters/counties to choose between stable rents (rent stabilization with vacancy control) and stable homes (good cause eviction). Rent stabilization with vacancy control protects renters from rent-gouging and keeps rents lower for decades. Without vacancy control (i.e., a 10% cap on rent increases even when the home becomes vacant), rent stabilization does not work. Rents rise dramatically when the tenant vacates, so corporate landlords have more incentive to find “good cause” for an eviction. There is no evidence that reasonable rent stabilization with vacancy control and an exemption for new construction affects housing production.

At least [48 local elected officials oppose this false choice amendment](#). In March 2025, these local elected officials – including a majority of the Montgomery County, Prince George’s County, and Baltimore City councils as well as the chief executives in Montgomery County, Anne Arundel County, and Baltimore City, – issued a signed a letter to the General Assembly opposing any bill that would force their counties to choose between vacancy control and good cause eviction.

HB 774 is local enabling legislation *only* – untying the hands of counties so that they can pass good cause eviction legislation if they want to and give residents the opportunity to stay rooted in their communities if they are abiding by the lease. If a county chooses to pass good cause, they will then integrate the new law into alignment with other local policies to meet local needs. Eight other states – including Colorado and New York last year – and 23 counties and cities have passed good cause eviction laws. Maryland is only one of 5 states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing good cause eviction.

When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks; and, renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction. The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Some corporate landlords will non-renew a lease out of a discriminatory motive, i.e., wanting to evict a family who has a voucher or discrimination based on family status (having children), race, disability, or sexual orientation. Tenants can also face eviction as retaliation if they try to organize and demand repairs to dangerous living conditions. Proving discrimination or retaliation is almost impossible, especially in district court where tenants do not have access to discovery tools like requests for production of documents and depositions.

Black families bear the brunt of these evictions. [1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism](#).

HB 774 is targeted at large corporate landlords who have rigged the system for too long. The bill explicitly exempts landlords who own five or fewer rental units in Maryland.

[Up to 25% of households who are evicted become homeless](#). Good Cause Eviction is a no-cost way for Maryland to prevent more families from becoming homeless at a time in which the federal government is shredding the social safety net.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 774.