

Dear Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Rianna Eckel, I am a resident of District 43A and a member of Showing up for Racial Justice. Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore is a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA and Renters United. **I am writing in support of HB774, enabling legislation for Good Cause Eviction.**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

I support Good Cause Eviction because I have been a renter in Baltimore City for nearly 10 years. I currently live in a house with a negligent landlord, but my place is the best option I can afford. I am afraid of my landlord deciding not to renew my lease, so I pick and choose what to ask to be repaired and make sure there is ample time between my requests. I would be less cautious if I wasn't afraid of retaliation.

HB774 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for corporate landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur. The bill specifically exempts small landlords who own five units or less, because it is the large, corporate landlords that have been abusing the system. Moreover, it is enabling only: it places the decision of whether just cause eviction legislation is appropriate in the hands of the county, which has a greater depth of understanding of their individual communities' needs.

The real estate lobby wants you to believe that allowing local counties to bar baseless evictions will somehow damage the availability of affordable housing. This is baseless speculation. Recent research examining the impact of "just cause eviction" legislation in three states showed that such laws did not reduce the rate of new housing production/supply.¹ Real estate interests have previously convinced this committee to add amendments to this bill which force localities to choose between rent stabilization and good cause eviction laws on the baseless premise that having both will cause decreased capacity. There is no evidence of this. On the other hand, we know for a fact that families need both stable rents and stable homes to remain housed.

Cause-less evictions are a frequent tool of corporate real estate investors trying to enable unconscionable rent increases. Individuals and families who have done nothing wrong are forced to uproot their entire lives as a result. Cause-less evictions are also used to target "undesirable" tenants such as those using housing vouchers or who try to organize or demand repairs. It is virtually impossible for even those tenants who are being unlawfully discriminated against to prevent their eviction, given that the housing court docket is designed for efficiency and does not allow the kind of discovery available in larger lawsuits.

Maryland families who pay their rent and play by the rules deserve to stay in their homes. The General Assembly can help ensure that by allowing counties which see a need for good cause eviction legislation to pass it. For these reasons, I am asking you to pass a **clean version of HB774**, without any developer-approved amendments intended to diminish its effects.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rianna Eckel
2300 Hunter St, Baltimore 21218
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

¹ Kenton Card, Evan Davis, Edward Goetz, and Jeremy Schwartz. *The Good Case for "Good Cause": Do Good Cause eviction protections reduce the rate of housing production?* Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, March 3, 2025. https://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.umn.edu/files/2025-03/final_the-good-case-for-_good-cause-v2.pdf