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TESTIMONY ON HB#/0774 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

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

FROM: Anna T. Levy

My name is Anna T. Levy. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0774, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

Safe and stable housing has far reaching economic, health, and social benefits to individuals, families, and communities, and is key to reducing racial inequities. Renters routinely have little agency when faced with threats to maintaining stable housing. As a Jewish person, I am taught that all people should have *dei machsoro*, resources sufficient for each person's needs. (Deut. 15:7-8) The home is a critical source of stability for individuals and families. It provides a nexus for social interactions for families, friends, and communities. We know from published research, including a recent analysis by the [Maryland Center for Economic Policy](#), and those of Matthew Desmond and Princeton's Eviction Lab, that the disruption resulting from evictions contributes to long term physical, psychological, educational, and economic damage that can condemn people to poverty and destabilize communities. "No cause" or "tenant holding over" eviction cases have increased 42% increase since 2019 and we know that families who are evicted are more likely to face homelessness.

Evictions create significant costs for state and local government related to funding for shelter and education, as well as health care provided in hospitals instead of by community-based providers, transportation costs for homeless youth, and foster care. Notably, evictions have a disparate impact on Black and brown households in Maryland. Decreasing the number of evictions would help to reduce significant racial inequities and strengthen the financial status of individuals and our communities. Thus, we have an obligation to make sure that people can stay in their homes.

There are valid contractual reasons for non-renewal of rental leases. Bill HB0774 would enable local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause eviction laws to protect tenants who are fulfilling their contractual obligations so that they can continue to maintain a safe and stable home. Currently, landlords can decide not to renew a tenant's lease for any reason, even when a tenant fully meets their rent and fee obligations and adheres to the terms of their lease. This means that a landlord can force out a tenant who complains about unsafe or unhealthy conditions, for other non contractual reasons, or because the landlord wants to dramatically raise rents. HB0774 does not negate a landlord's right to not renew the lease of disruptive or delinquent tenants. It

simply protects tenants who are doing the right thing to stay in their homes by requiring landlords to provide a just cause for non-renewal of a lease. Additionally, the bill will exempt from Good Cause laws, owner-occupied properties and landlords owning five or fewer properties in a county.

Please reject any amendments that force jurisdictions 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. Evidence has not shown that reasonable rent stabilization with vacancy control and an exemption for new construction negatively affects housing production. Additionally, 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.

Good cause eviction legislation has been introduced numerous times in different Maryland counties, including Montgomery County, where I live and where it has previously been supported by the Montgomery County Council and the Montgomery County legislative delegation. Requiring good cause as a precondition for an eviction can be a policy that boosts the stability of the housing market by stabilizing families, neighborhoods, and communities to the benefit of all.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report with no weakening amendments on HB0774.