

To the members of the Economic Matters Committee,

I am a Baltimore City resident and a renter, and I would like to advocate for the passage of HB0774 on good cause eviction.

I have rented for my whole adult life, including the years that I have lived in Baltimore. Like most renters, I have been through my share of unpleasant rentals. When I first moved to Baltimore to be a teacher, I rented an apartment sight-unseen. The home that I found was, in many ways, not up to standard. There was a gap the size of about half my hand in the window. The bath was painted, for some reason, and dangerously slippery. Neither the kitchen (which has a gas stove) or the bathroom had any kind of ventilation. And, as I would later learn, my fridge was not grounded, which meant I was at risk of being electrified for many months.

This kind of experience is common among renters in our state. Yet many renters are reluctant to come forward about these problems because they fear retribution from their landlords. By requiring landlords to give a justification for evictions, we take away unjust leverage from landlords and empower renters to advocate for themselves. This is particularly important in our age of federal overreach and punitive immigration enforcement.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I ask the committee to approve HB0774.

Luke Zeigler