



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB0080: Residential Leases - Fee Disclosures

Economic Matters Committee

Thursday, February 5th - 1:00 pm

Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

Junk fees are hidden, confusing, or unnecessary charges that renters often discover only after they have committed to a lease and have little real choice. In the rental market, these fees routinely show up as mandatory “service” charges, administrative fees, or add-ons buried in lease agreements that do not improve housing quality or provide meaningful value to tenants.

Approximately one in three Marylanders are renters, and a majority of them are rent-burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their income toward housing.¹ When undisclosed or poorly explained fees are layered onto base rent, tenants face higher monthly costs they could not reasonably anticipate or compare while searching for housing. This lack of transparency distorts the market and shifts risk entirely onto renters.

HB0080 addresses this imbalance by establishing clear, statewide standards for fee disclosure in residential leases. The bill ensures that prospective tenants receive a complete and plain language list of all potential fees before signing a lease, including the purpose of each fee, whether it is mandatory or optional, the amount, and when it is due. In doing so, HB0080 protects renters from hidden or surprise charges while allowing landlords to continue levying legitimate, disclosed fees.

Last session, the House passed this bill with an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 135–4, reflecting broad agreement that transparency and fairness should be baseline expectations in Maryland’s rental market. By increasing clarity, predictability, and trust, HB0080 helps ensure renters can make informed decisions and landlords can compete on clear, honest terms.

Notably, HB0080 does not interfere with separate utility charges, lease violation penalties, or lawful security-deposit deductions, ensuring the bill remains targeted and balanced. Similarly,

¹ Brown, Danielle J. “Maryland continues to pose affordability challenges for low-income renters, report finds.” Maryland Matters.

JOE VOGEL
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

Ways and Means Committee

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The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 224
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3103 · 301-858-3103
800-492-7122 Ext. 3103
Joe.Vogel@house.state.md.us

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counties and cities would retain the ability to pass ordinances of their own, as long as they are within the principles of the law.

I urge the committee to give a favorable report on HB0080.