



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0774:**

**Good Cause Eviction**

February 26, 2026  
Out for Justice Inc.

To: Members of the Economic Matters Committee

Dear Chair Kriselda Valderrama, Vice Chair Lorig Charkoudian, and members of the Economic Matters Committee.

Out for Justice is a grassroots nonprofit formed by formerly incarcerated individuals that organizes justice-impacted people to reform harmful criminal legal policies and remove barriers to successful reentry. **We submit this written testimony in strong support of House Bill 774 - Good Cause Eviction.** We would like to thank Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins and Delegate Stephanie Smith for leading this important legislation and advancing a balanced approach to housing stability in Maryland.

HB0774 authorizes counties to adopt local Good Cause Eviction laws that prohibit certain landlords from refusing to renew a lease or terminating a holdover tenancy without good cause. The bill amends the Real Property Article to establish uniform notice, disclosure, and pleading requirements, ensuring landlords provide a legitimate reason for nonrenewal while preserving clearly defined statutory grounds for eviction.

**HB0774 directly advances housing stability for justice-impacted individuals, which is foundational to successful reentry, economic mobility, and long term public safety.** Justice impacted Marylanders face significant barriers to securing and maintaining housing. Even after completing their sentences, individuals with records are often perceived as high risk and are vulnerable to lease nonrenewal without explanation. Without Good Cause protections, tenants can lose housing arbitrarily or in retaliation for asserting basic rights. **HB0774 creates clear, enumerated standards for what constitutes good cause and applies only to landlords who own six or more residential rental units statewide, ensuring the policy targets larger operators while exempting small owner occupied properties.**

**If enacted, this bill would reduce unnecessary housing displacement among justice impacted individuals and their families.** Stable housing is one of the strongest predictors of successful reentry. When tenants are removed without cause, the consequences extend beyond a change of address. Individuals may lose employment, experience financial instability, disrupt family reunification efforts, and face increased risk of homelessness. Research demonstrates that formerly incarcerated individuals face significant structural and interpersonal stigma in the housing market, including landlord discrimination, criminal



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background screening barriers, and exclusion from subsidized housing programs, all of which compound existing affordability challenges.<sup>1</sup>

**Housing insecurity does not simply create inconvenience for our members.** It reinforces stigma, limits access to employment, weakens family stability, and increases the likelihood of further system involvement. By requiring landlords in participating counties to state and prove a legitimate reason before refusing lease renewal or terminating a holdover tenancy, HB 774 increases transparency and fairness in the rental market. **In practice, this means greater housing stability, improved economic security, and stronger community safety outcomes.**

Some may argue that Good Cause protections interfere with landlord rights. **However, HB0774 explicitly preserves defined grounds for eviction, including substantial lease violations, nonpayment of rent, illegal activity, property damage, owner occupancy, major renovations, and withdrawal of the unit from the rental market.** The bill is narrowly tailored. It does not eliminate eviction as a remedy. It simply requires that termination decisions be based on legitimate, enumerated reasons supported by specific facts. As such, concerns about overreach are overstated and do not outweigh the measurable benefits of this proposal.

**Housing stability is essential to successful reentry, economic mobility, and long term public safety. House Bill 774 provides a practical and responsible framework that balances tenant protections with clearly preserved landlord rights.**

**For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 774 - Good Cause Eviction.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

On behalf of Out for Justice,  
Treveric Speaks  
Leadership Development Coordinator

For more information please email: [advocacy@out4justice.org](mailto:advocacy@out4justice.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Keene, Danya E., et al. "Stigma, Housing and Identity after Prison." *The Sociological Review*, vol. 66, no. 4, 12 June 2018, pp. 799–815, doi:10.1177/0038026118777447.