



# CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

## **House Bill 774 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)**

**House Economic Matters Committee**

**February 26, 2026**

### **SUPPORT**

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of House Bill 774. Stable housing is essential for daily life as it meets a basic human need.

House Bill 774 aims to promote stable housing by allowing counties to decide when it is appropriate not to renew rental agreements. Landlords and property owners can file "tenant holding over" cases if they choose not to renew a lease, which can involve reasons such as significant breach of lease, illegal activity by the tenant, or plans to remove the property from the rental market. However, current law does not require landlords to have a reason to evict tenants when a lease expires. This situation leaves families susceptible to eviction without cause. Legal assistance organizations have noted an increase in "tenant holding over" cases, resulting in more evictions.

House Bill 774 specifies various reasonable circumstances that qualify as causes for not renewing a lease. The City of Takoma Park agrees with these circumstances. Furthermore, the bill provides protections for renters against unfair treatment, discrimination, or unexpected evictions that could negatively impact individuals, families, and communities.

We have witnessed the pain caused by involuntary displacement. Families are forced to pack quickly or leave their belongings behind. Older adults and young families find themselves searching desperately for shelter, and children must adjust to new schools, disrupting their education and sense of stability. This turmoil impacts not only those directly affected but also the well-being of our entire community. While the City offers programs to assist residents facing eviction, we must address a significant loophole to truly protect our neighbors from these sudden and distressing displacements.

Some argue that tenant protections hinder the construction of new affordable housing, but we disagree. For example, Montgomery County's rent stabilization law provides a 23-year exemption for newly constructed rental units. So, such policies can be designed in a way that does not discourage development. In fact, from 2020 to 2024, six of the ten cities building the most affordable housing had good cause eviction laws, rent stabilization laws, or both. This evidence shows that it's possible to encourage new housing construction while also protecting tenants.

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While good cause eviction legislation and rent stabilization are distinct policies that should not be combined into a single legislative measure, we believe they complement one another and can work together to promote housing stability. House Bill 774 defines procedures and valid reasons for evictions, enabling landlords to evict tenants who violate their lease, engage in criminal activities, threaten other tenants, or fail to pay rent. In the future, it will be important that municipalities have clear authority to enforce similar measures in instances in which their respective counties do not enact this legislation. However, this bill is a crucial step forward.

For these reasons, Takoma Park urges a favorable report on House Bill 774 so that counties and municipalities can act on this issue.

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