



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

COUNCILMEMBER LAURIE-ANNE SAYLES

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, CHAIR

AT LARGE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

February 24, 2026

***FAVORABLE TESTIMONY FOR HB 774 – LANDLORD AND TENANT - RESIDENTIAL LEASES AND HOLDOVER
TENANCIES - LOCAL GOOD CAUSE TERMINATION (GOOD CAUSE EVICTION)***

Dear Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Honorable Members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

I write in strong support of HB 774, Good Cause Eviction. This legislation is long overdue and essential to establishing basic protections for Maryland renters against no-cause evictions that displace families even when tenants fully comply with their leases.

Local jurisdictions must have the authority to enact these protections. Renters represent nearly 35 percent of households in Montgomery County. Last year, I joined a majority of my County Council colleagues and our County Executive in urging our state partners to pass a clean bill. Unnecessary amendments risk undermining these protections and weakening the rental stabilization framework that thousands of county residents depend on for housing stability.

As Chair of the Montgomery County Council's Health and Human Services Committee, I see the consequences of inaction firsthand. Homelessness in our county has risen by more than 30 percent, driven in part by unjustified lease nonrenewals. This trend strains our social safety net and fuels a public health crisis. The County is forced to expend limited resources on emergency and temporary housing, where families remain for more than a year on average at above-market rates subsidized by taxpayers. This approach is unsustainable and fiscally irresponsible.

The evidence is clear. Eviction, and even the threat of eviction, leads to poorer physical and mental health outcomes, including increased stress, depression, and risk of suicidality. As the Council's Lead for Eliminating Disparities in Public Health, I am deeply concerned that these harms fall disproportionately on communities of color, compounding existing inequities.

The absence of good cause eviction protections also undermines housing code enforcement. Montgomery County has more than 5,000 housing units classified as troubled or at risk, where residents, disproportionately Black and brown, often endure unsafe conditions. Fear of retaliatory eviction prevents many tenants from reporting violations, allowing hazards to persist and increasing liability for both landlords and the County.

STELLA B. WERNER COUNCIL OFFICE BUILDING · ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

(240) 777-7964

COUNCILMEMBER.SAYLES@MONTGOMERYCOUNTYMD.GOV

If granted this authority, I am committed to advancing balanced housing policies that protect vulnerable residents while supporting housing production goals. I support the small-landlord exemption included in HB 774 and look forward to working with state and local partners to ensure fair and effective implementation.

Having personally experienced housing insecurity, I know the fear of not knowing whether you will have a place to call home. HB 774 affirms that housing stability is foundational to health, economic security, and dignity. I urge you to pass HB 774 and provide local jurisdictions with the tools needed to protect renters across Maryland.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurie-Anne Sayles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurie-Anne Sayles
Montgomery County Councilmember At-Large
Chair, Health and Human Services Committee