



## House Bill 681

**Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections**

**Bill: House Bill 681 Baltimore City - Ordinance Enforcement - Amount of Fines and Penalties**

**Date: March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Position: Informational**

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The Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA) is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 214,000 rental housing homes in over 1015 apartment communities. Our members house over 571,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 270 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

House Bill 681 increases the maximum amount that Baltimore City is authorized to establish for civil and criminal fines and penalties for violating certain ordinances, rules, or regulations from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

MMHA has historically opposed granting authority to local governments to increase the maximum amount from the original \$1,000 amount that was set prior to 2024. MMHA believes that reasonable fines serve as a necessary deterrent to bad actors, but there is a point where fines can become excessive and lead to unintended consequences. For our industry, this could lead to more evictions, as housing providers may be more inclined to find a resident in breach of lease if their conduct results in a \$5,000 fine that the property owner must pay. Further, such fines may lead to increased litigation and legal challenges, as individuals and business entities contest the fairness of the fines.

With that said, MMHA recognizes that with the passage of Senate Bill 522/2024<sup>1</sup> and Senate Bill 829/2025<sup>2</sup>, Baltimore City remains the sole local body in the State that does not have the ability to set their maximum fines and fees up to the \$5,000 threshold. As HB 681 brings Baltimore City on equal footing with the rest of the State in this regard, MMHA will not oppose the legislation.

Assuming the passage of HB 681, MMHA would ask the Baltimore City Administration to carefully consider the potential impacts of fines, ensure fairness and proportionality in application, and explore alternative approaches to address undesirable behaviors without resorting to measures with unintended outcomes.

Please contact Matthew Pipkin, Jr. at (443) 995-4342 or [mpipkin@mmhaonline.org](mailto:mpipkin@mmhaonline.org) with any questions.

<sup>1</sup> Maryland General Assembly. (2024). *Senate Bill 522: Charter counties—Enforcement of local laws* (2024 Regular Session). <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0522?ys=2024rs>

<sup>2</sup> Maryland General Assembly. (2025). *Senate Bill 820: Municipalities – Enforcement of ordinances and resolutions* (2025 Regular Session). <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0820/?ys=2025rs>