



## TESTIMONY FOR SB0729

### Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Henson

**Committee:** Judicial Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0729 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Homeownership for many Marylanders not only provides financial stability but it also conveys to children, allowing a family to hold a large asset over time. For those who own a home but struggle to make ends meet, foreclosure represents a staggering loss. Not just homelessness, but financial insecurity for the rest of their lives.

Maryland has created an Access to Counsel Fund to help those who cannot afford counsel during eviction proceedings access to legal representation. The ability to access counsel in such traumatic circumstances has been invaluable for residents of the state. However, persons who live in a mobile home were not originally considered eligible to utilize the fund.

This bill, if enacted, would expand the Access to Counsel Fund to include persons who live in a mobile home. We believe that anyone who gets a foreclosure notice or a notice that their property is being repossessed should have access to counsel to ensure that they are being treated fairly.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.