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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SPONSOR TESTIMONY

**Senate Bill 462 Landlord and Tenant – Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies –
Local Good Cause Termination**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Senator C. Anthony Muse, representing the 26th Legislative District in Prince George's County. I respectfully submit this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 462, which authorizes counties, by local law or ordinance, to adopt good cause requirements for the nonrenewal of residential leases and the termination of holdover tenancies.

Senate Bill 462 is local enabling legislation, not a statewide mandate. The bill does not require any county to adopt a good cause law. Instead, it provides counties with the authority to act if local officials determine such protections are appropriate for their communities.

Good cause eviction is also very popular. In a recent poll conducted by Greater Greater Washington, 75% of Maryland residents support good cause eviction.

Maryland residents understand that good cause eviction promotes housing stability. While expanding housing supply remains critical, stability for existing tenants is equally important. Stable housing allows children to remain in the same schools, seniors to stay near medical providers, and workers to continue living near their places of employment. Arbitrary displacement undermines these outcomes and disrupts entire communities.

SB 462 is also about affordability. Nothing is more costly than an eviction. The moving expenses, first month's rent and security deposit. Plus, in this market, there is nowhere affordable for families to go. Keeping rent-paying families in their homes is critical to affordable housing too.

Under SB 462, a county that chooses to act may require a landlord to provide a legitimate reason before refusing to renew a residential lease or terminating a holdover tenancy. The bill is narrowly tailored and includes significant limitations. It applies only to landlords who

own six or more residential rental units statewide. Small landlords are exempt, and owner-occupied rental properties are excluded.

The bill establishes a clear and finite list of good-cause grounds, including substantial lease violations or property damage, nonpayment or habitual late payment of rent, illegal activity, refusal of lawful access, landlord or family occupancy, substantial renovations, or removal of the unit from the rental market. Counties are expressly prohibited from adding additional or alternative grounds. This structure ensures consistency, predictability, and fairness for both tenants and landlords.

Evictions without cause contribute to housing instability beyond the individual tenant. When tenants fear retaliation or displacement for reporting unsafe or unhealthy conditions, properties deteriorate, and surrounding neighborhoods are negatively affected. SB 462 promotes transparency and accountability while preserving landlords' existing rights to regain possession for legitimate reasons.

Notably, 41 county officials across Maryland have requested this authority, including leaders from Prince George's County. Despite this, Maryland remains one of only a small number of states that prohibit counties from enacting good cause eviction protections. Eight states and numerous local jurisdictions nationwide have adopted similar laws while maintaining functioning rental markets.

Senate Bill 462 imposes no cost on the State and provides counties with a responsible tool to address local housing conditions. And recent research by professors at Loyola University Maryland and colleagues found that good cause eviction has no impact on new housing development. This bill is a win-win that strikes a careful balance between tenant stability and property rights.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 462.