

Long Branch Housing Action Team

SB 462 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, Feb. 12, 2026

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

The Long Branch Housing Action Team is part of Renters United Maryland and urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 462. We also urge the Committee to pass SB 462 as originally written and to reject “poison pill” amendments that would force local governments to choose between effective rent stabilization and good cause eviction protections.

My name is Kathy Porter. I live in Long Branch and I am a volunteer member of the Long Branch Housing Action Team. The Long Branch neighborhood of Silver Spring and Takoma Park in Montgomery County is a very diverse neighborhood with tenants and homeowners, families of all income levels, people of many races and ethnicities, and several languages spoken. About half of our neighbors are renters and many of them are immigrants.

Much of our housing stock is older and some rental units have consistent problems with conditions in violation of the housing code. Yet, many tenants are afraid to complain about housing code violations because they fear they will be evicted. Those who are immigrants are especially fearful of speaking out. One tenant, whose son suffered from asthma, lived with mold in her apartment for months. Her landlord’s solution was to paint over the mold, which only temporarily covered up the issue and did not address the underlying problem. Yet, because she feared being evicted, she was afraid to press him too hard to correct the problem. In a survey the Long Branch Housing Action Team did in 2025, we found that 85% of the tenants who responded said they were afraid to bring up problems with their apartments because they feared being evicted.

Current law, which allows tenants to defend themselves against eviction if they can prove the eviction is retaliatory, is not adequate to protect tenants. One tenant, who did speak up about conditions in her building, successfully fought in court against an eviction order from her landlord that was clearly retaliatory. Because she knew her rights, obtained good legal counsel, and had the job flexibility to attend multiple court appearances, she won her case. However, all she received under the law was a six month reprieve. She is now looking for a new place to live.

SB 462 is local enabling legislation only; it unties the hands of county governments so that they can enact good cause eviction legislation if they choose. In Montgomery County, housing policies have been discussed through several election cycles and the current elected county leadership has a good handle on the policies their constituents want. It is indefensible that a state like Maryland, which enjoys great diversity in its population and is committed to fairness and equality for all, is

one of only five states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing good cause eviction laws.

It is important that local governments be able to provide their renters both freedom from retaliatory evictions through good cause eviction laws and stable rents through rent stabilization with vacancy control. Without vacancy control, rent stabilization does not provide stable rents over time. Members of the Montgomery County Council cited the lack of good cause eviction laws as just one of many reasons to support rent stabilization with vacancy control. Legislators in other jurisdictions agree. In March 2025, nearly 50 local elected officials, including the majority of the Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and Baltimore City councils, signed a letter to the General Assembly opposing any bill that would force them to choose between vacancy control and good cause eviction.

Good cause eviction does not affect housing development. Researchers from Loyola University Maryland and others examined how good cause eviction operates in New Hampshire, Oregon, and California and found no impact on housing development. Some of the jurisdictions studied had rent stabilization and others did not; this made no difference in the impact.

Good cause eviction does not impose an undue burden on landlords. It provides many causes that would allow a landlord to evict a tenant, including actions by the tenant that damage the property, violate the lease, disturb other tenants, or make it difficult for the landlord to manage the property, among other reasons. It also allows landlords to evict tenants if the landlord decides to do major renovations, live in the property himself, or just remove it from the rental market. Small landlords – those who own fewer than six rental housing units – are exempt from the law.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on SB 462. Thank you.