



Regarding Senate Bill 729 – Favorable
Submitted by Birgit Sharp, 3/3/2026

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of CANDLE.¹ CANDLE supports **SB729 Real Property – Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks**. It is important to protect affordable mobile home communities while keeping them safe and livable, especially given the severe shortage of affordable housing in Maryland.

The residents of mobile homes are some of the most vulnerable in our state. They include people with disabilities, retirees, immigrants and veterans. Many of their communities are facing deteriorating infrastructure. Nearly all of these communities are owned by private, often out-of-state investors who are focused on profitability and/or redevelopment. Neglected infrastructure, rising and arbitrary fees, and retaliation against residents requesting attention to these issues are common. Residents voicing concerns about these issues have been threatened with eviction and/or continually receive additional fees for services without justification. Residents have complained about long-standing problems including recurring water shutoffs, foul or discolored water, unexplained fees, and difficulty renewing leases.

Current state and federal laws do not adequately protect these residents, in part because of the unique differences between this housing model and other ways that people are housed in Maryland. This legislation builds on the existing Access to Counsel in Evictions Program <https://legalhelpmd.org/> which recognizes the desire to ensure that low-income households are not forced to navigate complex eviction and tenancy disputes without legal help, while recognizing that mobile homes face distinct legal and practical vulnerabilities.

It is critical that Maryland join Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Oregon, Massachusetts, Washington, and Rhode Island in adopting protections preserving these essential affordable communities.

1 CANDLE is the Community Action Network for Democracy, Liberties and Equality, based in Anne Arundel and Calvert counties. Our membership is close to 150 people.

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Far better to light the candle, than to curse the darkness.