

**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)

I am a 45 year veteran of housing finance work and a volunteer member of Long Branch Housing Action Team, part of Renters United Maryland, and urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 462.

Whether homeowner or renter – across race, class, and zip code – all Marylanders deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. Yet, in FY 2025, landlords filed nearly 5,000 “no cause” or “tenant holding over” eviction cases – a 42% increase since 2019. SB 462 would allow local jurisdictions to pass Good Cause Eviction laws and prevent families from being evicted unless a corporate landlord provides a legitimate reason. **We urge the Committee to pass a clean SB 462 and reject poison pill amendments that would force counties and renters to choose between having strong rent stabilization and good cause eviction protections. This is a false choice. We need stable rents and stable homes.**

I have spent 45 years working in housing finance (nationally with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, locally with nonprofit affordable housing practitioners and local government housing departments), and I understand how the legal and financial relationships work. Clarifying the right of tenants to renew leases on terms consistent with any new potential tenant represents a critical element of a healthy Fair Housing market.

Everyone knows that housing represents more than a commodity. Housing represents a commitment to community, schools, jobs, extended family and the future. Families invest themselves in their housing, whether they own it or not.

Renters enter into a contract with their landlord, obligating each party to certain responsibilities. Landlords by law cannot discriminate against any potential renter without cause, renters cannot violate their lease conditions without legally enforceable consequences. These laws generally address the fundamental power disparity of the tenancy relationship, providing reasonable protections to both parties.

However, the option for a landlord to deny lease renewal to a tenant who has met the terms of lease requirements represents a significant weakness in current protections. A landlord can violate its obligations to maintain safe, sanitary housing with knowledge that tenants will hesitate to complain based on the disproportionate impact of forced moving costs and disruptions from lease renewal denied without cause. Current protections against retaliation provide little protection, with lease denial only restricted within 6 months of a complaint.

Landlords object to defining cause for lease denial based on concern that tenant challenges to the stated cause, and the litigation/mediation process to defend the assertions cost too much and take too long. The idea reflects the idea that leases renewal should not be automatic to a tenant who has not

demonstrably violated the lease runs counter to fair housing laws which require that a new lease be offered to any applicant who has no demonstrable violations of eligibility.

Landlords allowed to deny a renewal without cause allows landlords to discriminate against tenants based on race, age, sexuality, gender identification, or ethnicity with the only remedy a discrimination complaint requiring proof of pattern and practice. Landlords defending an allowed cause-based denial represents a reasonable business requirement relative to the Fair Housing obligations inherent in the business.

Good Cause is essential to affordable housing. Nothing is more costly to families than eviction – moving expenses, finding a new home with few options, transferring schools in the middle of the year. [Every dollar spent on eviction prevention returns \\$2.39 to the state from reduced social safety net costs related to homelessness.](#)

Researchers from Loyola University Maryland and others found that [Good Cause has no impact on housing development](#) after examining how Good Cause works in NH, OR, & CA. Some of these jurisdictions have rent stabilization; some do not. It does not matter.

Please reject any poison pill amendment that forces renters/counties to choose between stable rents (rent stabilization with vacancy control) and stable homes (good cause eviction). Rent stabilization with vacancy control protects renters from rent-gouging and keeps rents lower for decades. Without vacancy control (i.e., a 10% cap on rent increases even when the home becomes vacant), rent stabilization does not work. [Rents rise dramatically when the tenant vacates, so corporate landlords have more incentive to find “good cause” for an eviction.](#) **There is no evidence that reasonable rent stabilization with vacancy control and an exemption for new construction affects housing production.**

Rent stabilization adopted in Montgomery County allows rent increases of CPI + 3%, which exceeds average rent increases over the past 30 years with only exceptions for recent COVID inflation spike – which could be made up with subsequent year adjustments. Developers don't finance housing assuming rent spikes – but average rent increases below the stabilization cap percentage. Smoothing rent increases protects tenancy and meets financing expectations over time.

At least [48 local elected officials oppose this false choice amendment.](#) In March 2025, these local elected officials – including a majority of the Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and Baltimore City councils as well as the chief executives in Montgomery County, Anne Arundel County, and Baltimore City, – issued a signed a letter to the General Assembly opposing any bill that would force their counties to choose between vacancy control and good cause eviction.

SB 462 is local enabling legislation *only* – untying the hands of counties so that they can pass good cause eviction legislation if they want to and give residents the opportunity to stay rooted in their communities if they are abiding by the lease. If a county chooses to pass good cause, they will then integrate the new law into alignment with other local policies to meet local needs. 8 other states – including Colorado and New York last year – and 23 counties and cities have passed good cause eviction

laws. **Maryland is only one of 5 states that explicitly prohibits counties from passing good cause eviction.**

When corporate landlords engage in no-cause evictions, families cannot stay rooted in their schools, jobs, and support networks; and, renters do not report hazardous conditions out of fear of eviction.

The whole neighborhood suffers.

Good cause requires transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. Some corporate landlords will non-renew a lease out of a discriminatory motive, i.e., wanting to evict a family who has a voucher or discrimination based on family status (having children), race, disability, or sexual orientation. Tenants can also face eviction as retaliation if they try to organize and demand repairs to dangerous living conditions. Proving discrimination or retaliation is almost impossible, especially in district court where tenants do not have access to discovery tools like requests for production of documents and depositions.

Black families bear the brunt of these evictions. [1 in 4 Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism.](#)

SB 462 is targeted at larger corporate landlords, the **bill explicitly exempts landlords who own 5 or fewer rental units in Maryland.**

[Up to 25% of households who are evicted become homeless.](#) **Good Cause Eviction is a no-cost way for Maryland to prevent more families from becoming homeless at a time in which the federal government is shredding the social safety net.**

For these reasons, I strongly urge following the numbers, the logic and standing with the rights of tenants to a fair contractual agreement which protects Fair Housing choices and practices. Please provide a favorable report on SB 462.