

February 12, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

Ellen West Lazar
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

TESTIMONY ON SB #0462 - FAVORABLE/LANDLORD AND TENANT-
RESIDENTIAL LEASES AND HOLDOVER TENANCIES-LOCAL GOOD
CAUSE TERMINATION

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings
Committee

FROM: Ellen West Lazar

My name is Ellen West Lazar. I am a resident of District 20. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0462, Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies-Local Good Cause.

I am submitting this testimony as a longtime resident of Montgomery County and also as a native New Yorker, who grew up in rental housing in the outer boroughs. My experiences growing up led me to a long, successful career as an attorney and, later, as a government and nonprofit leader in affordable housing and community development. Over the years, among other places, I served as an attorney with the National Corporation for Housing Partnerships; the General Counsel of the Enterprise Foundation (dba Enterprise Community Partners), founded by the Maryland developer James Rouse ; the U.S. Treasury Department, where I served as Director of the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund; as CEO of NeighborWorks America; and as a senior vice president of the Fannie Mae Foundation. In these capacities I worked with for-profit and non-profit developers and landlords throughout the United States, working to build stronger, more sustainable communities for lower income and working families.

In my experience, long-term leases (in my childhood in New York, most leases were for three years) help keep families in their homes and children in their schools. Stability in rental housing - exemplified by paying your rent on time and abiding by the terms of the lease - helps individuals and families build their own economic security and community. The Enterprise Foundation's original mission was to "to bring people up and out of poverty, into the mainstream of American life". This lofty goal was particularly focused on the many renters in our communities, striving toward a better life and, perhaps, one day, homeownership. It is essential that communities in our state have the ability to institute Good Cause Eviction clauses in their Landlord/Tenant laws and regulations. Allowing renters to renew their leases on a regular basis, if they have met the requirements of the lease, profoundly impacts their ability to have roots in their community, build their credit and have their children have continuity and stability in their education.

Beyond my childhood experiences in New York, as a longtime housing professional - both on the for-profit and non-profit side - I have witnessed how important it is for the health and welfare of communities to have good relations and trust between landlords and tenants. Meeting the rigors of a lease, including paying rent on time, entitles tenants to only be evicted from rental housing if there is "good cause". I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable, with no amendments, report on SB#0462.