

Dear **Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We work in collaboration with CASA de Maryland and Renters United. I am a resident of **District 46**. I am a small “mom-and-pop” landlord ever since retaining our last property after buying a new home two years ago. My great grandmother Alexine Solomon Wickes, grandmother Jean Gowell Wickes, and mother Waverly Wickes Ford were “mom-and-pop” landlords to an apartment building my family built in Chestertown in 1893. I believe that a person’s home is a serious life-and-death matter to be taken extremely seriously, renter or owner, and take my moral responsibility not to evict without cause extremely seriously. I wish the State I love shared those moral convictions. **I am testifying in support of SB462.**

SB462 allows local jurisdictions to require a just basis for corporate landlords to either refuse to renew or to cut off month-to-month and week-to-week leases. This legislation allows local legislatures to pass laws, if they choose, limiting how and when lease non-renewals occur. The bill specifically exempts small landlords who own five units or less, because it is the large, corporate landlords that have been abusing the system. Moreover, it is enabling only: it places the decision of whether just cause eviction legislation is appropriate in the hands of the county, which has a greater depth of understanding of their individual communities’ needs.

The real estate lobby wants you to believe that allowing local counties to bar baseless evictions will somehow damage the availability of affordable housing. This is baseless speculation. Recent research examining the impact of “just cause eviction” legislation in three states showed that such laws did not reduce the rate of new housing production/supply.<sup>1</sup> Real estate interests have previously convinced this committee to add amendments to this bill which force localities to choose between rent stabilization and good cause eviction laws on the baseless premise that having both will cause decreased capacity. There is no evidence of this. On the other hand, we know for a fact that families need both stable rents and stable homes to remain housed.

Cause-less evictions are a frequent tool of corporate real estate investors trying to enable unconscionable rent increases. Individuals and families who have done nothing wrong are forced to uproot their entire lives as a result. Cause-less evictions are also used to target “undesirable” tenants such as those using housing vouchers or who try to organize or demand repairs. It is virtually impossible for even those tenants who are being unlawfully discriminated against to prevent their eviction, given that the housing court docket is designed for efficiency and does not allow the kind of discovery available in larger lawsuits.

Maryland families who pay their rent and play by the rules deserve to stay in their homes. The General Assembly can help ensure that by allowing counties which see a need for good cause eviction legislation to pass it. For these reasons, I am asking you to pass a **clean version of SB462**, without any developer-approved amendments intended to diminish its effects.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

**John Preston Ford**

**529 S East Ave, Baltimore, MD 21224**

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<sup>1</sup> Kenton Card, Evan Davis, Edward Goetz, and Jeremy Schwartz. *The Good Case for “Good Cause”: Do Good Cause eviction protections reduce the rate of housing production?* Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, March 3, 2025. [https://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.umn.edu/files/2025-03/final\\_the-good-case-for-\\_good-cause-v2.pdf](https://www.cura.umn.edu/sites/cura.umn.edu/files/2025-03/final_the-good-case-for-_good-cause-v2.pdf)