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SB 635: Residential Real Property - Notice of Landlord Entry - Tenant Consent

Hearing of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on February 19, 2025

Position: FAVORABLE with AMENDMENTS

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a nonprofit public interest law firm that stands with tenants to protect and expand their rights to safe, habitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing and their rights to fair and equal treatment by Maryland's landlord-tenant laws, courts, and agencies. The PJC advocates for systemic change to build a just society. **PJC asks for a favorable with amendments report on SB 635.**

The Maryland General Assembly passed a law in 2025 protecting a tenant's right to be free from unannounced intrusions by landlords in non-emergency situations. **SB 635 as written would circumvent that law by allowing a landlord to enter as many times as they choose, if the tenant requests repairs.**

SB 635 as written sets up an impossible situation, particularly for single female tenants whose landlords would enter at times when the tenant was in a state of undress or otherwise compromised. Under **SB 635**, those same tenants may be forced to reconsider whether they can or should request repairs in writing if it means they will lose any protection against the landlord entering at will.

Further, the 2025 law that was passed was an already compromised bill. In last year's negotiations, tenant advocates agreed to shorten the required notice period from 48 to 24 hours, to lengthen the window of time when a landlord may enter, and to modify emergency-exception language to arrive a legislation that protects tenants without interfering with landlords' ability to make necessary repairs and manage their property.

It is rare that landlords need to begin repairs within 24 hours of a request in circumstances that are not already excepted from the law. If a repair will take more than 24 hours, the landlord could provide written notice under current law. Repairs of an emergent nature are already excepted. We do not oppose the provision related to ongoing repairs, but to remove the notice requirement entirely for a week after a tenant requests repairs will gut last year's hard-won tenant protections. **We request amendments to the bill that would allow repeated entrance for ongoing repairs, but limits the time period of an ongoing repair to three (3) days; provided that the landlord had already given an initial notice of entry.**