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Anne Arundel County

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on Children,  
Youth, and Families



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**March 5, 2026**  
**SPONSOR TESTIMONY**  
**Senate Bill 0729**  
**Real Property – Access to Counsel in Evictions Program**  
**and Mobile Home Parks**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair and Committee Members

For the record, I am Shaneka Henson, representing District 30 in Anne Arundel County and member of the JPR Committee.

SB729 is the result of situations occurring in Maryland – as well as in other states throughout the US – and is one that is affecting the ability of residents in unique communities to remain in their affordable homes.

Over the years, Maryland has enacted legislation protecting tenants' rights regarding notices, costs, and evictions. Yet, there is another group of residents – both tenants and owners living in the nearly 437 mobile home communities throughout Maryland [2024 *Penn State Research Study on mobile home communities*]<sup>1</sup> with whom the subject of landlord/tenant relations has long been ignored by existing legislation.

Primarily located in the southern, mid, and northeast, and eastern shore areas, residents in mobile home communities (or parks as they are also referred to) include retirees, elderly, veterans, county, and state employees, as well as families at the margin or below the average median income level, such as immigrants, people with disabilities, and others in need of below market-rate housing.

For example, in southern Anne Arundel County, within the Lothian area which encompasses the largely rural and agricultural areas from MD 450 and MD 214 south to the County boundary, there exists a concentration of the region's low-income households.

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<sup>1</sup> *Protections of (Im)mobile homeowners from the consequences of (Im)mobile home park closures – Kenneth Barr, Attorney/Urban Planner – Penn State Law Review-Article 779 [Vol. 128.3]*

- 14% of all the households in this region are defined as having “very low income” - meaning a family four has an income less than \$58,050 annually.
- 17% of the households qualify as being within the county’s “rental workforce housing” category, meaning those who earn incomes less than \$50,000

Of the approximately 82,000 residents in the area,

- 82% reside in single-family detached homes
- However, -- of those “single-family detached homes” - **nearly 20% are mobile/manufactured** housing units located within the 4 distinct communities of
  - Maryland Manor
  - Patuxent Mobile Estates (Sands Rd)
  - Boones Mobile (Old Rt 408)
  - Lyons Creek Mobile

What is different about these communities is that the property owners are predominantly private investors who rent out a parcel of land in which the mobile home sets upon. While residents either own or rent their dwelling units, all are charged a specific fee to rent the lot the unit sets upon, as well as paying separately for utilities and other charges.

Residents – whether owners or renters of a mobile home unit are typically only allowed a one-year unrenewable lease, which includes unregulated practices. Existing federal and state laws protecting landlord-tenant relationships do not apply to mobile home communities. And while Maryland enacted the 1980 Mobile Home Act, this legislation is vastly outdated and in need of attention.

Similar to other landlord/tenant situations, neglect of the infrastructure and community needs is a continuing situation. Residents voicing concerns about these issues are threatened with eviction and/or continually receive additional fees for services without justification – which is how owners are able to continually increase the rental fees.

Maryland is not alone with its mobile home communities experiencing these situations and threats to the affordability of their housing. The states of Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Washington, Rhode Island, and others have adopted regulatory changes addressing the landlord/tenant relationships of mobile home residents – and protecting their ability to continue to live in these affordable communities.

SB729 and the companion HB1517, results from a five-month research/work group on this issue that included legal aid attorneys, mobile home community residents, and affordable housing advocates. The resulting legislation now includes.

- Clearer Definitions: Clarifying key terms, including “rent.”

- Tenant Protections: Establishing explicit criteria for violations and strengthens anti-retaliation provisions.
- Rental Agreement Reforms: Adds new prohibitions and clarifies existing ones.
- Discrimination Safeguards: Recognizes and addresses discriminatory enforcement.
- Fee and Utility Protections: Limits unreasonable fees and utility upcharges.
- Legal Consistency: Aligns security deposit rules and anti-discrimination statutes with other state laws.
- Eviction Procedures: Improves safeguards for tenant property and defines procedures for subtenant evictions.
- Access to Counsel: Ensures mobile home residents are covered under the Access to Counsel in Evictions law.
- Jury Trial Rights: Clarifies availability and procedures for jury trials in disputes.
- Stronger Enforcement: Increases consequences for non-compliance by park owners.

After hearing the witnesses description of the situations encountered and an understanding of why this legislation is needed to address this essential affordability gap, I urge the committee to give you a favorable report to SB0729.