

Testimony before the Maryland Senate

Regarding Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction) (SB 462)
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Good afternoon:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to participate at today's hearing.

My name is Kathryn Howell. I am an associate professor of Urban Planning at the University of Maryland with more than 20 years of expertise in housing as both a researcher and a practitioner. In addition, I am the executive director of the National Center for Smart Growth where we conduct practice-relevant and partner-driven research on issues related to housing, transportation, small business and land use.

The question of Good Cause has been found to be a critical tool for the prevention of displacement and the acknowledgement that renters have a critical stake in their communities. Researchers from the University of Minnesota have conducted the first analysis of the impact of Good Cause Eviction Protections on development. The analysis finds no evidence that the introduction of Good Cause Eviction Protections in California, Oregon, and New Hampshire resulted in a decline of new construction (see Scientific Appendix and Figures 1-2). Additionally, preexisting research has found Good Cause Eviction Protections lead to a statistically significant *decrease in evictions* ([Cuellar 2019](#), see Figure 3) and *decrease in displacement* ([Hwang et al. 2022](#)). While I know that this moment has been challenging for developers trying to build, we cannot use tenants as a scapegoat for trends that are instead driven by widespread rising costs of development and operation of housing, including land, labor, materials and insurance.

At the same time, economists have recently found that rent stabilization can directly *reduce rent prices by 4-6%* and *does not reduce the supply of housing units* ([Jofre-Monseny et al. 2023](#)). In other words, rational rent stabilization, along with good cause can create predictability for renter households - something I'm sure many of you also want for your families. By knowing that, if they pay their rents and don't violate their leases, they can stay in their homes, parents can engage more comfortably in their children's schools and their neighborhoods, and, more importantly, they can relax and plan for the future, knowing that they don't have to nervously await a notice from their landlord.

This is really important for our backyard at NCSG, the Purple Line corridor in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. This area has historically held some of the most affordable unsubsidized rental housing stock in the otherwise high-cost Washington metropolitan region. However, researchers have shown that residential rents within a half mile of the Purple Line are now [rising at a disproportionately rapid rate](#) even before rail service begins, likely due to anticipation of the future value of the land on which these homes sit. Rising property values and new rent stabilization policies create incentives for landlords to maximize profits through tenant turnover. This puts current Purple Line tenants at risk of displacement when landlords choose not to renew a lease – even for long-standing tenants who are paying their rent and abiding by the terms of their lease. Such evictions can cause irreparable harm to families and disrupt entire communities.

Passing this legislation is important for the wellbeing of the communities along the Purple Line and throughout the state of Maryland, and we encourage your support. Thank you, and please contact me at klhowell@umd.edu if you wish to discuss further.