



Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 462

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

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

We Are CASA (formerly, "CASA") is pleased to offer **favorable testimony** in **support** of **SB 462** Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction).

We Are CASA is the largest membership-based immigrant rights organization in the mid-Atlantic region, with more than 60,000 members in Maryland. Our mission is to create a more just society by building power and improving the quality of life in working class and immigrant communities. We envision a future where our members stand in their own power, our families live free from discrimination and fear, and our diverse communities thrive as we work with our partners to achieve full human rights for all.

For nearly forty years, We Are CASA has employed grassroots community organizing to bring our communities closer together and fight for justice, while simultaneously providing much needed services to these communities, helping to ensure that low-income immigrants are able to live rich and full lives. We provide critical legal services to low-income renters throughout the state of Maryland. We are also members of Renters United Maryland (RUM), a coalition of independent non-profit, legal services, and community-based organizations dedicated to ensuring Maryland renters live in safe, sustainable, and affordable housing.

Lack of a Good Cause Eviction Contributes to the Current Crisis of Housing Instability. Currently in Maryland, corporate landlords can evict tenants for no good reason; as a result, many Marylanders are experiencing severe housing instability. In Montgomery County alone, households experiencing homelessness increased **80%** from 2024 to 2025, and a whopping **98%** from 2023 to 2024.¹ As rents and the cost of living continue to rise and emergency rental assistance funds evaporate, research indicates

¹ Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, *Homelessness in Metropolitan Washington* (May 2025), <https://www.mwcog.org/documents/2025/05/14/homelessness-in-metropolitan-washington-results-and-analysis-from-the-annual-point-in-time-pit-count-of-persons-experiencing-homelessness-featuring-publications-homelessness/>.

landlords make 5,000+ families homeless each year because of an eviction, and more than 30,000 Marylanders experience homelessness each year.² There is a clear and dire need to curb evictions and keep Marylanders rooted in our communities.

Good Cause Eviction Is Crucial to Protecting Tenants' Basic Rights. Good Cause Eviction is critical for We Are CASA members and our communities to protect their rights to safe and sanitary living conditions. We have seen, time and time again, that when tenants organize, complain about conditions, and enforce their rights, landlords and property managers respond with Tenant Holding Over (THO) eviction suits. For example, we have represented tenants from multiple apartment complexes in Montgomery and Prince George's County where the landlord exploits a known legal loophole to retaliate against tenants exercising their rights by waiting out the clock.³ Thus, corporate landlords retaliate against tenants who are hardworking, who pay their rent on time, and who cause no trouble for their neighbors when they assert their rights. Good cause would protect our members and communities, many of whom face cultural, educational, and linguistic barriers against this discriminatory business practice. Therefore, this legislation is necessary to protect tenants' basic rights to safe and habitable homes because without it, when tenants complain about unsanitary conditions or organize within their tenants associations, they risk retaliatory eviction. SB 462 will also reduce the generational poverty and displacement eviction causes.

The current law in Maryland encourages landlords not to renew leases and allows for landlords to remove month-to-month tenants from their homes without needing to provide a reason. This creates fear and disempowers tenants from holding landlords and property managers accountable for fixing deplorable living conditions. SB 462 would allow renters to exercise their rights and engage with landlords, property managers, and government agencies without fear of retaliation or discrimination, i.e., to have some security in their homes, school system, and support network. SB 462 also has an exemption for small landlords, which keeps the focus on corporate landlord accountability. **Maryland is one of only five states that explicitly prohibit counties from passing Good Cause Eviction laws.** Eight states – California, Colorado, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington – as well as D.C., have passed Good Cause Eviction legislation, as have over 23 localities.

Further, SB 462 would allow local jurisdictions the ability to pass good cause laws, which simply require transparency and accountability from corporate landlords for why they are choosing to evict a tenant. **Again, this is local enabling legislation – not a state mandate** – so that counties may pass good cause within the framework of their housing needs and master plan.

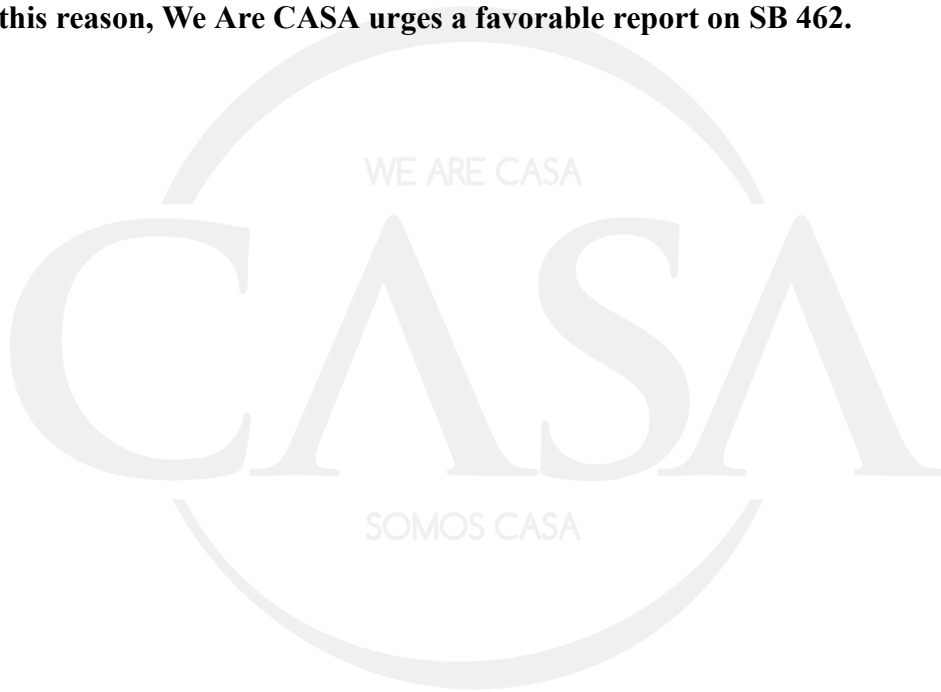
² Healthcare for the Homeless, *Homelessness in Maryland* (accessed February 10, 2026), <https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-maryland>.

³ Maryland Code Real Property § 8-208.1(e) says that a landlord filing an eviction case or terminating a tenant's lease is not retaliatory if the termination or filing happens six (6) months after the tenant engaged in any activities protected by the statute. This means a landlord merely has to wait 120 days to retaliate against tenants.

Good Cause Eviction Will Help Ease Housing Instability and Decrease Frivolous Eviction Filings. Research shows that good cause eviction laws significantly reduce eviction filings, meaning fewer Marylanders are at risk of being put out of their homes. This means fewer evictions for Black Marylanders who are disproportionately impacted by evictions. For example, one (1) in four (4) Black children in renting households face the threat of eviction each year due to structural and systemic racism.⁴ Additionally, this would help the courts, who are often overwhelmed by mass eviction filings, focus on eviction cases where the landlord provides a clear reason for the eviction, as well as other important non-housing cases. Further, the research is also clear that Good Cause Eviction has no impact on new housing development and will not drive business from Maryland.

Lastly, passing enabling legislation for local Good Cause Eviction laws would save the state money on support programs and provide a no-cost way to prevent homelessness, strengthen our communities, and hold corporate landlords to account.

For this reason, We Are CASA urges a favorable report on SB 462.



⁴ Badger et al., *The Americans Most Threatened By Eviction: Young Children*, New York Times (Oct. 2, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/02/upshot/evictions-children-american-renters.html>