

Candle Testimony for SB729 Access to Council in Ev

Uploaded by: Birgit Sharp

Position: FAV



Regarding Senate Bill 729 – Favorable
Submitted by Birgit Sharp, 3/3/2026

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of CANDLE.¹ CANDLE supports **SB729 Real Property – Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks**. It is important to protect affordable mobile home communities while keeping them safe and livable, especially given the severe shortage of affordable housing in Maryland.

The residents of mobile homes are some of the most vulnerable in our state. They include people with disabilities, retirees, immigrants and veterans. Many of their communities are facing deteriorating infrastructure. Nearly all of these communities are owned by private, often out-of-state investors who are focused on profitability and/or redevelopment. Neglected infrastructure, rising and arbitrary fees, and retaliation against residents requesting attention to these issues are common. Residents voicing concerns about these issues have been threatened with eviction and/or continually receive additional fees for services without justification. Residents have complained about long-standing problems including recurring water shutoffs, foul or discolored water, unexplained fees, and difficulty renewing leases.

Current state and federal laws do not adequately protect these residents, in part because of the unique differences between this housing model and other ways that people are housed in Maryland. This legislation builds on the existing Access to Counsel in Evictions Program <https://legalhelpmd.org/> which recognizes the desire to ensure that low-income households are not forced to navigate complex eviction and tenancy disputes without legal help, while recognizing that mobile homes face distinct legal and practical vulnerabilities.

It is critical that Maryland join Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Oregon, Massachusetts, Washington, and Rhode Island in adopting protections preserving these essential affordable communities.

¹ CANDLE is the Community Action Network for Democracy, Liberties and Equality, based in Anne Arundel and Calvert counties. Our membership is close to 150 people.

candle.shines25@gmail.com

Far better to light the candle, than to curse the darkness.

SB0729 Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0729

Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks

Bill Sponsor: Senator Henson

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0729 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Homeownership for many Marylanders not only provides financial stability but it also conveys to children, allowing a family to hold a large asset over time. For those who own a home but struggle to make ends meet, foreclosure represents a staggering loss. Not just homelessness, but financial insecurity for the rest of their lives.

Maryland has created an Access to Counsel Fund to help those who cannot afford counsel during eviction proceedings access to legal representation. The ability to access counsel in such traumatic circumstances has been invaluable for residents of the state. However, persons who live in a mobile home were not originally considered eligible to utilize the fund.

This bill, if enacted, would expand the Access to Counsel Fund to include persons who live in a mobile home. We believe that anyone who gets a foreclosure notice or a notice that their property is being repossessed should have access to counsel to ensure that they are being treated fairly.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB0729_DHCD_SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Jake Day

Position: FAV



WES MOORE
Governor
ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor
JACOB R. DAY
Secretary
JULIA GLANZ
Deputy Secretary

DATE: March 5, 2026
BILL NO.: Senate Bill 729
TITLE: Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks
COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Letter of Support

Description of Bill:

Senate Bill 729 would expand access to legal representation under the Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE) Program to individuals who live in a mobile home park. The ACE program is administered by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, and it provides free lawyers to renters living in Maryland who have a household income that is at or below 50% of Maryland's median income.

Background and Analysis:

The ACE program was established in 2021 by the Maryland General Assembly, and services began to be administered in July of 2022. Under the program, the Maryland Legal Services Corporation was to provide access to legal representation individuals who either occupy a residential property under a claim of right other than owner (tenants) or are members of a household with an income that is not greater than 50% of the median income of the State (adjusted for household size). However, as written in the 2021 legislation, the program would not have been able to assist residents of mobile homes. As a result, the program would inherently best serve residents in suburban and urban areas.

Residents of mobile home parks experience many of the same economic disadvantages as traditional renters like the threat of eviction from failure to pay rent, and breach of lease, or even subsidy terminations as many residents of mobile homes make applicable use of a section 8 voucher on a mobile home that meets HUD quality standards. In expanding the program's "covered individuals" to include residents of a mobile home park, SB 729 is protecting another vulnerable population, thereby strengthening the original legislation, and protecting Maryland residents who rent or live in a mobile home park.

DHCD Position

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 729.



SB729_FAV_EconAction.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: FAV



**SB729: Real Property -
Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks**

Position: Favorable

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Will Smith, Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund urges a favorable report on SB729, which would ensure appropriate eviction protections for residents of mobile home parks.

Mobile home parks are an important element of affordable housing and have a smaller environmental footprint than traditional homes. In 2017, there were 36,318 mobile homes in Maryland with the highest percentage in Cecil County (7.4%) followed by Wicomico (4.4%) and Allegheny (4.3%).

These residents own their homes but not the ground they sit on. These households pay monthly rent to the owner of a manufactured housing community, and can be evicted like any tenant. But the difficulties faced by a tenant in an apartment building - packing their belongings, finding a new home, and moving - are compounded drastically for residents of a mobile home park.

If it becomes necessary for a mobile home park resident to move, it costs thousands of dollars to relocate the home. The cost and logistics of relocating can be prohibitive, often forcing these owners to either sell their mobile home for pennies on the dollar or abandon their home altogether.¹ This makes mobile home residents uniquely vulnerable when faced with the threat of eviction.

Because of the legal status of mobile park residents, many of the protections afforded to tenants have historically not been available to them. SB729 would address this oversight in state law by extending basic guardrails that protect individuals facing eviction to mobile home owners, and allowing mobile home owners to access legal assistance traditionally reserved for traditional renters.

¹ <https://evictionlab.org/mobile-home-parks-eviction/>

Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.



For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB729.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Deputy Director

Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD 21218 | www.econaction.org
Marceline White · Marceline@EconAction.org | Jennifer Bevan-Dangel · Jennifer@EconAction.org

SB 729 - CLS Support - Mobile Home Parks.pdf

Uploaded by: John Kowalko

Position: FAV

Jessica A. Quincosa, Esq.
Executive Director

Kayla Williams-Campbell, Esq.
Deputy Director

Lisa Sarro, Esq.
Director of Litigation &
Advocacy



SB729 - Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks

**Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 5, 2026**

Position: FAVORABLE

To the Honorable Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

[Community Legal Services](#) (CLS) supports Senate Bill 729.

CLS provides free, high-quality legal services to protect the fundamental rights, ensure equal access to justice, and uplift the individuals, families, and communities we serve. The CLS Eviction Prevention Program assists low-income individuals and families facing eviction through the Access to Counsel in Evictions program. We provide representation for thousands of Maryland households annually.

CLS strongly supports Senate Bill 729 to ensure critical protections are in place to protect the rights of mobile home park residents. Without these protections, mobile home park residents are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Mobile Home Park Residents Are the Most Vulnerable Tenants Under Maryland Law

“Mobile homes” is an older term for what is now more commonly referred to as manufactured housing. Almost all “mobile homes” are in fact permanent residences that cannot be moved without extremely costly expenses and the risk of critical damage to the home.

Whether these homes are rented or owned, they are on property owned by the mobile home park, and the residents must pay a fee to rent their lot area. Therefore, park residents who own their mobile homes are taking an extreme risk under current Maryland law. One late rental payment gives a park owner enough legal justification

to evict the residents from a mobile home.¹ In most cases, the residents are unable to move their home due to cost or risk of damage, and so the park gets to reclaim that home as abandoned property.

One missed payment, and a mobile home resident can lose not just their home but all the money and investments they have put into that home. And for the unscrupulous park owner, they can flip that home and do it all again to the next tenant.

The exploitation of mobile home residents in Maryland has only worsened as mobile home parks are increasingly bought up by hedge funds and other large institutional investors.² The affordable housing crisis in Maryland has worked to squeeze these residents through both increased demands for affordable homes as well as rapidly increasing lot rents, causing more and more residents to fall behind on the lot rent and eventually lose their homes as a result. These evictions fall most heavily on those who depend on the affordability of mobile home communities, such as veterans and retirees.

SB 729 Provides Urgently Needed Protections for Mobile Home Residents

Senate Bill 729 would significantly **enhance protections for “qualified residents” by requiring a “substantial violation” to deny lease renewals.** Thousands of mobile home residents would no longer have to fear the threat of eviction and the loss of their home for a single late rental payment.

In addition, in the cases where a resident is evicted, SB 729 would **require park owners to make a written offer to purchase the home based on the appraised value** by a qualified and disinterested appraiser. Residents would no longer have to fear losing all their housing investments upon eviction, and park owners would no longer be able to merely flip houses as abandoned property.

SB 729 also **aligns Maryland law for mobile home tenants with the protections afforded to all other tenants** in the state for notice periods before landlords can file eviction lawsuits or impose rent increases. Mobile home tenants would no longer be the forgotten class of tenancies that lack these protections.

Finally, SB 729 makes several minor changes to address common areas of exploitation for mobile home residents, including **prohibiting common excessive and unjustified fees and requiring certain policies and rules be provided to residents in writing.**

¹ See [Maryland Real Property § 8A-202\(c\)\(1\)\(i\)](#). One missed rental payment is sufficient to disqualify a resident from being a “qualified resident” who is entitled to a one-year lease renewal each year. For non-qualified residents, their lease can be changed to month-to-month at the expiration of the prior term. Once a resident is on a month-to-month lease, a park owner can end their lease upon 30-days’ notice. The residents would have no recourse to challenge the subsequent eviction as tenants holding over after the expiration of a lease term.

² See, e.g., [Cassie Powell, “Private equity firms are snapping up mobile home parks – and driving out the residents who can least afford to lose them.” *The Conversation* \(November 3, 2025\).](#)

Mobile homes have long been a vital affordable housing choice for low-income individuals and families, but Maryland law needs to keep up with the protections needed to ensure this choice is not in actuality a trap designed to exploit and defraud the low-income families and individuals who rely on it.

The Maryland General Assembly has the opportunity this year to protect these vulnerable tenants and their families by fixing the law for mobile home residents. Every year that this is not fixed, people are hurt. People are put out of their homes for no good reason, and since they are mobile home residents, they may lose their house and all the money they put into it as well.

For questions, please contact John Kowalko at johnkowalko@clspgc.org.

Community Legal Services urges a favorable report on SB 729.

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAVSB729_.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Zelaya

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 5th 2026

SB729

**Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 729**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 729 strengthens the Access to Counsel in Evictions Program by extending legal representation and supportive services to individuals living in mobile home parks. Mobile home residents often face unique vulnerabilities, including complex tenancy laws and power imbalances between residents and park owners. By authorizing prospective residents to take legal action when essential documents or disclosures are withheld, the bill ensures transparency, fairness in housing agreements, and accountability for park owners. Its purpose is to prevent exploitation and ensure residents understand their rights before entering long-term commitments.

Expanding access to legal counsel helps stabilize households, prevent unjust evictions, and reduce the long-term social and economic costs associated with housing insecurity. Families who receive legal support are more likely to remain housed, avoid homelessness, and protect their financial well-being. When communities experience fewer evictions, neighborhoods remain stable, local schools and businesses benefit, and social safety nets experience less strain. These protections are especially critical in mobile home communities, where residents often own their homes but rent the land—creating unique risks when legal protections are weak or unclear.

By defending the dignity of the human person and promoting the common good through stable housing we prioritize the most vulnerable populations. Ensuring that families have fair access to legal support is an expression of solidarity, especially toward those who face structural disadvantages in the housing market. Housing is more than a commodity—it is a basic human need essential to safety, stability, and family life. By expanding legal protections and preventing unjust displacement, this bill honors the Gospel call to protect the vulnerable and uphold justice in social structures. Supporting this bill is a moral commitment to fairness, compassion, and the well-being of Maryland families.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 729**.

Testimony in support of SB0729 - Real Property - A

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0729_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

03/05/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0729- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0729, **Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks**

This bill states that the Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) shall provide for access to legal representation by a covered individual for a judicial or administrative proceeding to EVICT or terminate the tenancy or housing subsidy of a covered individual. This includes attempts to repossess the premises of a covered individual. The access to legal representation ... includes the first appeal of a decision in the proceeding if the designated organization determines that there are sufficient legal grounds for the appeal.

The bill specifies when, where, how and under what conditions an eviction can occur and when legal representation must intervene in the proceedings.

This bill will meet those goals by altering the Access to Counsel in Evictions Program to expand access to legal representation and other services under the Program to individuals who occupy premises of a mobile home park; authorizing a prospective resident of a mobile home park to bring an action against a park owner for failing to provide certain documents and terms related to the tenancy; etc.

Persons in this situation often have limited or no resources to oppose the action being taken against them by landlords with substantial legal assets. This bill will help level the field and place these individuals on an equal footing in legal matters affecting their housing.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0729.

SB0279presentation.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Shaneka Henson

Position: FAV

The image shows a row of single-story houses with white horizontal siding and dark shutters. The houses are set on a green lawn with trees in the background. The text "Protecting Maryland's Affordable Housing Communities" is overlaid in white, bold font across the center of the image.

Protecting Maryland's Affordable Housing Communities

SB279 – HB1517
Real Property-Access to
Counsel in Evictions
Program and Mobile Home
Parks

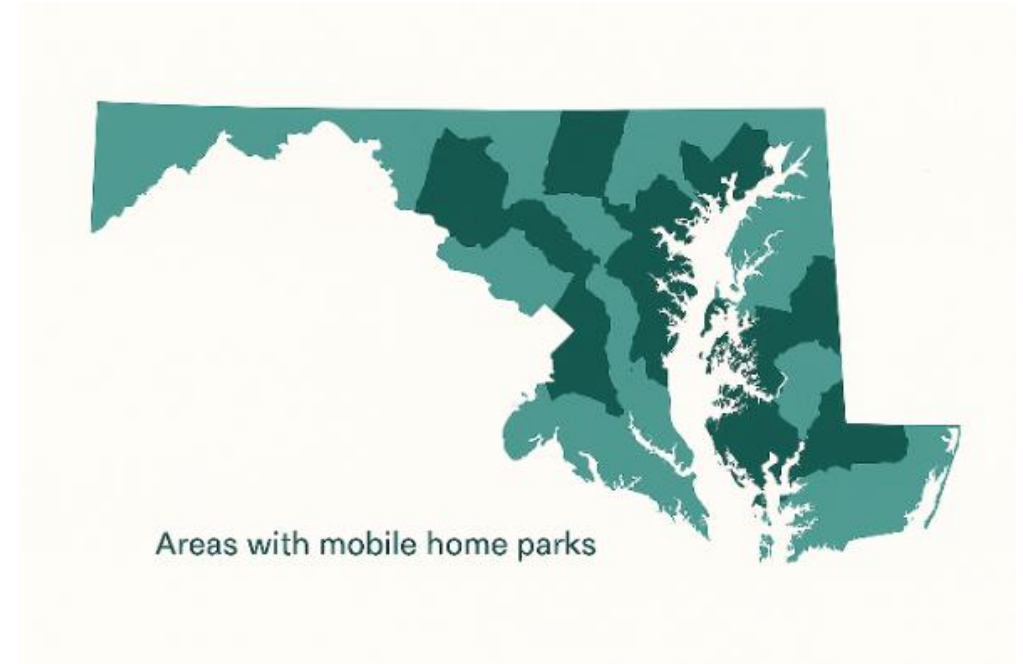
Reforming the 1980 Maryland Mobile Home Act



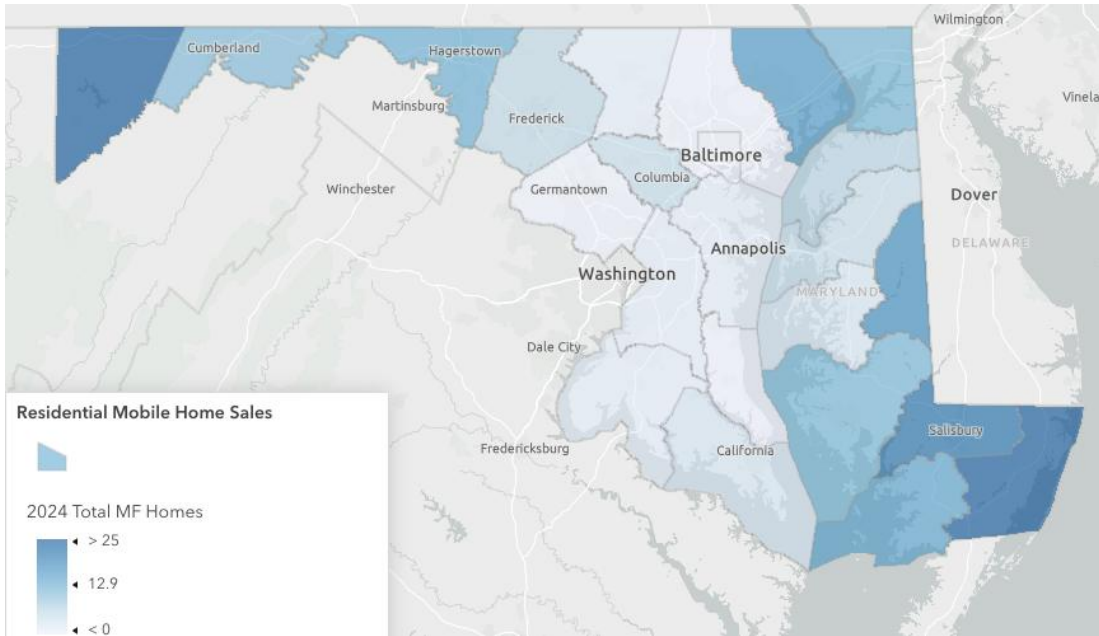
Maryland's 437 mobile home communities -- southern, mid, and northeast, and eastern shore areas include

- Retirees, elderly, veterans, county, and state employees,
- Families at the margin or below the average median income level, such as immigrants,
- Individuals with disabilities, and others in need of below market-rate housing.

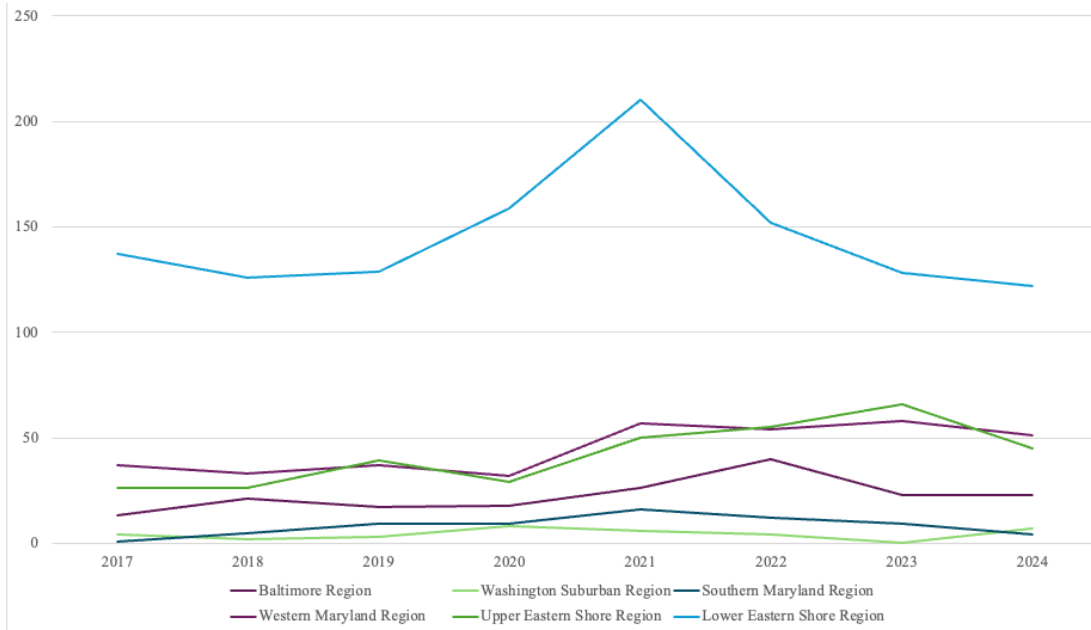
There is a demand for this housing.



Mobile Home Sales in Maryland



Left: Number of Mobile Home Sales by Maryland Region, from 2017-2024



Right: Number of Mobile Home Sales by Maryland County in 2024.

Credit: NCSG analysis of Maryland Residential Sales Data, Maryland Department of Planning, Planning Data Services.

Example Housing Needs: Southern Anne Arundel County (Lothian area)

- Large concentration of the region's low-income households.
- 14% of all the households 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

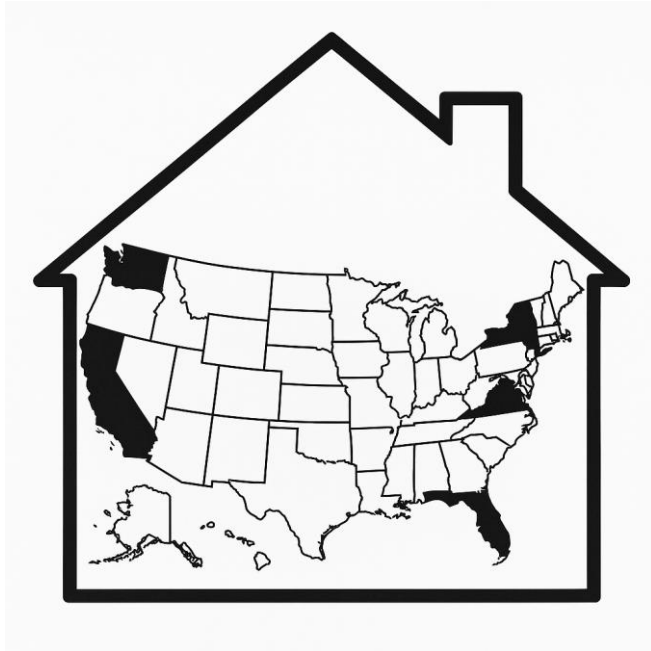
Of the approximately 82,000 residents in the area,

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

Existing 1980 Mobile Home Act is outdated

Does not address landlord tenant
relation/eviction issues

Threatens the ability of residents to
continue to live in affordable homes



Maryland joining the states Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Oregon, Massachusetts, Washington, Rhode Island, and others that have implemented regulatory changes safeguarding residents' ability to remain in affordable communities.

What SB0729 and HB1517 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 prohibits utility upcharges.

SB0729 and HB1517

- **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.

SB0729 sponsor testimony26.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Shaneka Henson

Position: FAV

SHANEKA HENSON
Legislative District 30
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*]¹ 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.

¹ *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.

SB729SB940 Mobile Home Tenant & Water Quality Prot

Uploaded by: Senator Shaneka Henson

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Addressing Hidden Threats to Residents in
Maryland's Unique Affordable Housing Communities

SB 729 Reforming Maryland's 1980 Mobile Home Act to Protect Residents
SB 940 Environment – Mobile Home Parks – Water Quality Testing
([Maryland Code, Real Property § 8A-101](#))

Callers to the office of Senator Henson (March 2025) pleaded for help to get water service restored in one of the four privately-owned, south county mobile home communities. For two days and going into the third, residents were without water to drink or use in their homes. Their calls to the mobile home community owners to obtain water went on deaf ears. Fearful of retaliation by the community owners, callers refused to leave their names and contact information. However, this disruption of water services, receiving discoloration and foul-smelling water, being charge together with unrelated and unexplained costs for services not received, and challenges to lease renewals was an ongoing pattern experienced by tenants for nearly five years!

Unique Affordable Housing Communities. With over 437 mobile home communities documented throughout the state of MD – the larger of which are in the southern, northeast, and eastern shore -- 2024 Penn State Research Report¹. As constitutes of the state's senators and delegates, residents in these communities are 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.

While they may either own or rent their units, residents are all charged a specific fee to rent the space the unit sets on as well paying separately for utilities and any other charges the owners want to pass on. And while the term "mobile home communities" may be similar to what is referred to as "manufactured" homes – they are not. They do not own the space they sit on and are unable to move them from their pad.

Threats to their Survival. Today's property owners of mobile home communities are private investors – many out-of-state – and likely with the mission to either increase their profitability or remove the housing, rezone the property, and build expensive homes. Neglect of the infrastructure and community needs is the norm to move the tenants out of their units. When questions or concerns are voiced about the situations they are experiencing, residents are threatened with

¹ Protections of (IM) mobile homeowners from the consequences of (IM) mobile home park closures-Kenneth Baar, Attorney Planner, Penn State Law Review-Article 779-780 (Vol.128.3)

eviction and/or receive additional charges without justification. Residents are typically only allowed a one-year unrenewable lease, which includes discriminatory illegal practices. Existing federal and state laws protecting landlord-tenant relationships, the maintenance of a community's infrastructure, and how non-related costs are passed on to tenants, are inadequate to protect the ability of these vulnerable residents to remain in these affordable communities.

Maryland's mobile home residents are not alone experiencing these threats. Legislators in the states of Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Oregon, Massachusetts, Washington, Rhode Island, and others have adopted regulatory changes protecting residents' ability to continue to live in these affordable communities.

Senator Shaneka Henson (D.30) and Delegate Marvin Holmes (D.23) have teamed up to Reform Maryland's 1980 Mobile Home Act, ([Md Code, Real Property § 8A-101](#)). The result of a six-month evaluation by a work group established by the Senator addressing the changes needed, key points in the legislation include.

- *Clarifying definitions that have recently been disputed and adds the definition of "rent."*
- *Clarifying the consequences of a park owner's failure to comply with existing law and provides an unqualified resident an opportunity to become a "qualified resident" if the park owner did not properly notify the resident of the requirements.*
- *Clarifying the severity and meaning of "violations" that can disqualify a resident from a continued right to a tenancy.*
- *Establishing new prohibitions on rental agreements consistent with those already existing in Title 8 and adds some prohibitions not yet existing in Title 8.*
- *Clarifying that discriminatory enforcement of non-discriminatory rules is still discriminatory. What owners can do to tenants/residents and not.*
- *Requiring that a notice be issued before violations of park rules are published and that they can carry a fee.*
- *Establishing a presumption that a fee for violation of a park rules exceeding 5% of rent is unreasonably high.*
- *Clarifying the meaning of code section 8A-503, which provides that a park owner cannot upcharge in any fashion for utilities, after recent legal disputes.*
- *Making protections consistent with the State Government Article § 20-702, regarding discrimination.*

- *Adding a provision that the park owner be available for contact in case of complaints and emergencies and that a private right of action for violations is placed in section 8A-801.*
- *Making security deposit rules consistent with those in Title 8.*
- *Clarifying the existing law, which is still inconsistent after legislative amendments of the 1980s.*
- *Adding language mimicking 8-601, regarding the availability of jury trials.*
- *Establishing a presumption, based on a similar analysis in Carroll v. HOC, that a dispute about qualified resident status entitles a tenant to a jury trial.*
- *Providing procedures for eviction by which the park owner must safeguard a tenants' property if the park owner does not actually remove the mobile home from the site in an eviction.*
- *Specifying eviction procedures between the park owner and subtenants.*
- *Strengthening the anti-retaliation provisions by increasing penalties to 6 months' rent and by eliminating the time restriction, which has a disproportionately negative effect on mobile home residents relative to traditional tenants.*
- *Adding a 60-day warrant requirement, to be consistent with § 8A-1701 and to prevent execution of stale judgments.*
- *Providing that a park owner, in a holdover eviction, must plead and prove compliance with existing law on qualified residents.*
- *Expressly covering mobile home residents under the Access to Counsel in Evictions law.*

Senator Henson's second bill, SB940 – Environment-Mobile Home Parks – Water Quality Testing -- addresses the enforcement of the state's water quality regulations relating to private community systems throughout Maryland. A hearing is scheduled for March 3, 2026, by the Senate Environment, Education and Energy Committee at 1:00 p.m., in the Senate Office Building. Delegate Jeffrie Long (D27B) is the house sponsor.

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Anne Arundel County _FAV_SB729.pdf

Uploaded by: Tom Ni

Position: FAV



March 5, 2026

Senate Bill 729
Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 729 – Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks. This Bill addresses serious issues that exist among the unique tenant-landlord relationships in mobile homes, which includes expanding access to counsel in eviction programs to mobile home residents, clarifying disputed definitions, and establishing explicit provisions regarding mobile home rental practice.

There are more than 400 mobile home communities across Maryland with significant concentrations in the northeast, the Eastern Shore, and southern Maryland, such as Lothian in Anne Arundel County. These mobile home communities provide unique affordable housing solutions to residents that include retirees, veterans, people with disabilities, immigrants, state and county employees, and families with low or moderate incomes. Despite the name “mobile homes”, residents live in manufactured units that serve as their permanent housing, which they must rent the land beneath them and pay separately for utilities and fees set by private owners. However, the Maryland Mobile Home Parks Act of 1980 is vastly outdated, and existing federal and state laws protecting landlord-tenant relationships do not apply to mobile homes. As a result, discriminatory illegal practices and ongoing disputes are widespread. Poorly maintained infrastructure, unregulated passed-on fees, and unrenowable short-term leases are challenges residents regularly face. Residents who voice concerns are threatened with eviction and, lacking legal recourse, remain vulnerable to exploitation.

It is critical that we address these issues, help protect our already financially vulnerable residents, and allow them to continue to live in these affordable communities. Fair and just practices are needed for both tenants and landlords to ensure that mobile home communities remain a sustainable affordable housing solution. This Bill makes significant reforms to existing legislation that expands legal protections to mobile home residents and establishes clear provisions regulating tenant-landlord relationships. For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 729.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steuart Pittman".

Steuart Pittman
County Executive

SB0792- Maryland Legal Aid - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Zafar Shah

Position: FAV



SB0729 – Real Property – Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks
Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,
March 5, 2025

Position: FAVORABLE

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) submits its written and oral testimony on SB 729 at the request of bill sponsor Senator Shaneka Henson.

MLA is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal services to the State's low-income and vulnerable residents. We serve residents in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions and handle a range of civil legal matters, most prominently those arising from housing insecurity. Under the Access to Counsel in Evictions law, MLA represented over 4,700 households in eviction proceedings in 2025. We urge the Committee's favorable report on SB 729 to protect the stability of Maryland's mobile home residents.

Throughout the state, there are over 31,000 households living in mobile homes, 70% of them owner-occupied.¹ This bill aims to improve mobile home residents' stability comprehensively by heightening safeguards against eviction, predatory practices, and unsafe conditions.

Mobile home residents face devastating consequences in the eviction process.

Owners of mobile homes have purchased a significant asset with a median value of \$80,900.² When they face eviction from a mobile home community, they not only deal with household destabilization and uncertainty, but also imminent loss of this asset. Like rental housing tenants in Maryland's massive eviction system, mobile homeowners are subject to a rapid legal procedure in the District Court. In that procedure, the mobile homeowner loses their right to use the park owner's lot. While they legally retain possession of their mobile home,

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units." *American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2504*, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S2504?q=United+States&t=Owner/Renter+\(Householder\)+Characteristics&g=010XX00US_040XX00US24](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S2504?q=United+States&t=Owner/Renter+(Householder)+Characteristics&g=010XX00US_040XX00US24). Accessed on 15 Feb 2026.

² U.S. Census Bureau, "Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units," *American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2504*, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S2504?q=United+States&t=Owner/Renter+\(Householder\)+Characteristics&g=010XX00US_040XX00US24](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S2504?q=United+States&t=Owner/Renter+(Householder)+Characteristics&g=010XX00US_040XX00US24). Accessed on 15 Feb 2026.

they could in practice lose it by failing to move the vehicle off the lot before a sheriff executes the eviction.

Moving a mobile home off the lot poses enormous challenges. Not only do park owners favor newly constructed homes over transfers,³ a transfer from one mobile home community to another involves prohibitive costs. A full-service move, in which the moving company “handle[s] disconnecting and reconnecting utilities, removing and replacing skirting and securing [the] home to the foundation [will] range from \$4,500 to \$22,000, with higher costs for very long moves or very large homes.”⁴ Beyond transport costs, mobile home residents know that moving the home risks irreparably damaging it and losing its value completely.

“[T]o move your mobile home to a different park, your options may be very limited – it may be much easier to sell your current mobile home and buy another at a different park than to move your mobile home.”⁵ Yet, the eviction process scarcely provides residents time to make a sale with any due diligence. Consequently, eviction poses more devastating consequences for mobile home owners than for rental housing tenants: “When [mobile] home owners facing eviction cannot move or sell their home, the homeowners’ only option is to abandon their home or try to sell it to the community owner – usually for a fraction of what it’s worth – eroding any equity the home might have accrued. In some cases, homeowners must sell their homes for less than their mortgage, meaning they walk away from evictions saddled with even more debt. After evicting residents, park owners often rent out or re-sell these homes.”⁶

Maryland law must catch up to the big business of mobile home parks.

Maryland’s mobile home park law, Real Property, Title 8A, has hardly changed since enactment in 1980. Meanwhile, the industry has undergone a sea-change as “mom and pop” park owners sold their parks to investment firms. Across the United States, private equity firms have capitalized on the housing insecurity of mobile home residents. “[R]esidents are vulnerable to exploitation by landlords looking to maximize profits. When site rent and fees are increased or

³ Private Equity Stakeholder Project, PESP Private Equity Manufactured Housing Tracker, <https://pestakeholder.org/pep-private-equity-manufactured-housing-tracker>.

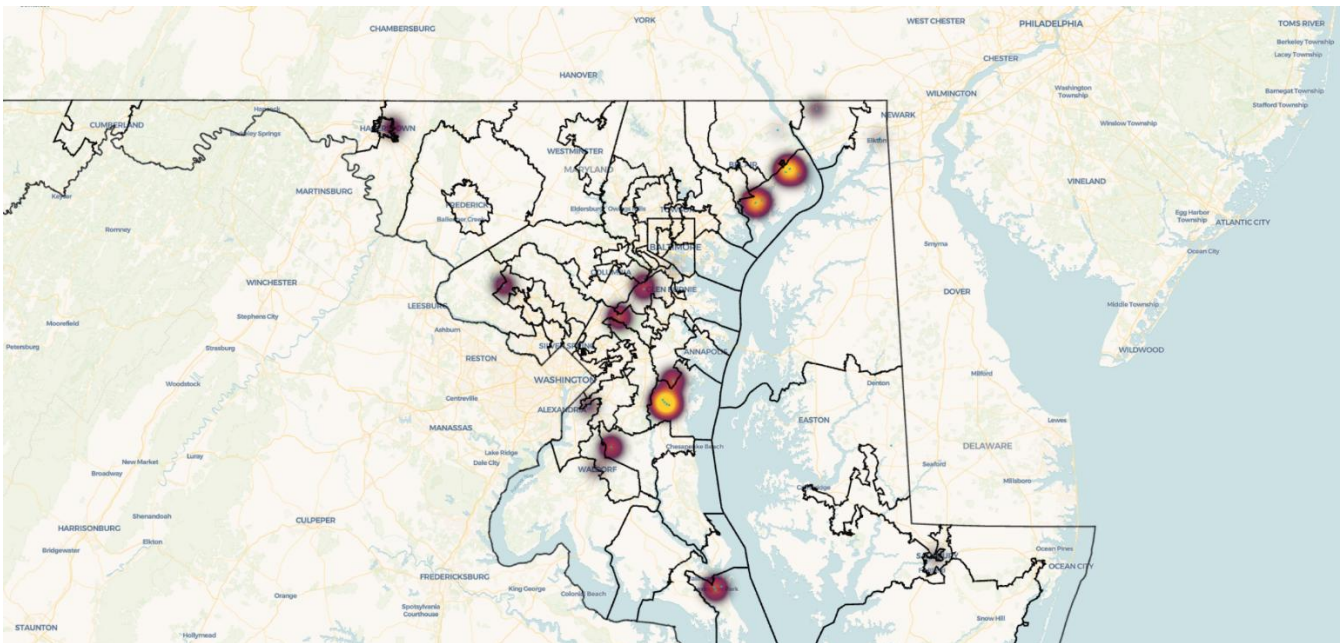
⁴ Kristin Salaky, “How Much Does It Cost To Move A Mobile Home?” Forbes.com (Apr 17, 2025), <https://www.forbes.com/home-improvement/moving-services/cost-to-move-mobile-home>.

⁵ Maryland Office of the Attorney General Consumer Protection Division, “Mobile Homes in Maryland,” Consumer’s Edge, https://oag.maryland.gov/resources-info/Documents/pdfs/CPD%20Publications/Mobile_Homes.pdf.

⁶ *Supra* n.2.

communal maintenance issues ignored, [mobile] homeowners often have no choice but to endure it. This economic trap is not a side effect but a building block of the business model.”⁷

Researchers have identified at least 28 Maryland parks – holding around 4,700 mobile homes, or 15% of the state’s total – that are owned by private equity firms or subsidiaries: Federal Capital Partners (12 parks, over 2,000 homes), RHP Properties (9 parks, 1,997 homes), Legacy Communities (5 parks, 550 homes), and Sunrise Communities (2 parks, 142 homes).⁸



Concentrations of private equity-owned mobile home parks (Private Equity Stakeholder Project)

Overview of protections under SB 729

This bill presents long-overdue reforms that address common vulnerabilities of mobile home residents.

A. Eviction prevention through the Access to Counsel in Evictions Program

The bill expressly brings mobile home park residents into the protections of the Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE) Program. This change adds needed clarity and implementation components that will ensure that mobile home residents receive notice about the right to access legal representation whenever they face eviction. Currently, mobile home residents

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

receive no notice about ACE. Practitioners fear that these residents have no awareness of the vital program when facing eviction, and that if they appear before a court, judges may be unaware that the ACE law applies to the case. SB 729 establishes this clarity for defendants and judges. It also increases awareness of ACE via a new “Notice of Intent to File” requirement for any eviction action and expressly affords residents a postponement to obtain counsel.

B. Increased due process in eviction procedures

The Notice of Intent to File in SB 729 provides a preventative measure to avoid eviction litigation altogether. It affords the opportunity for the resident to cure non-payment or continuing lease violation before the park owner may seek to evict. In non-payment cases, the mobile home resident will receive a 30-day notice, which triggers a 10-day cure period. In addition to affording time to seek counsel via postponement, the bill allows judges the discretion to adjourn proceedings for either party to procure necessary evidence or witnesses. The bill also extends the appeal period in mobile home eviction cases from two days to 15 and simplifies the appeal bond requirement. Payment of an appeal bond stays enforcement of an eviction order while the appeal is pending before the circuit court. Commonly, trial judges set the appeal bond at multiples of rent, such as three or four months. Lacking several thousand in cash on hand to store in a court account, many choose not to pursue an appeal at all. In lieu of lumpsum bond payments, SB 729 allows courts to receive prospective payments of monthly rent into an escrow account. If the resident fails to pay into the escrow, the circuit court may dismiss the appeal.

Crucially, SB 729 also alters the post-eviction stage of the eviction process so that residents have a reasonable opportunity to sell their mobile home. New section 8A-1706 (Pages 35-37) provides a resident at least 30 days after warrant execution before the mobile home may be considered abandoned property. During the 30-day post-warrant period, the park owner must give the resident access to the park for purposes of recovering personal possession inside the mobile home or making improvements to it. The resident may sell a mobile home to third party. If the park owner intends to purchase the mobile home, they must make a written offer to purchase within 20 days. This offer must meet at least the appraised value of the mobile home. Additionally, a court may extend this post-warrant period for good cause shown, such as hardship or pending sale. After the post-warrant period expires, the mobile home becomes abandoned property which the park owner may dispose of. If the park owner sells the abandoned mobile home, they must pay the former resident the proceeds of the sale minus deductions for outstanding rent and fees. These measures prevent the mobile home resident’s total loss of equity at eviction.

C. Protection against loss of Qualified Resident status

Under existing law, mobile home residents begin their tenancy with Qualified Resident status, which provides entitlement to renewal of the lease on a one-year term. So long as the resident maintains Qualified Resident status, they secure long-term stability and avoid the instability of

month-to-month leasing and no-cause eviction. Residents typically lose Qualified Resident status based on alleged violations of park rules or standards. SB 729 strengthens residents' ability to maintain Qualified Resident status (1) by permitting loss of status only for *substantial* violations and (2) by allowing the resident to cure loss of status within six months of the expiration of their lease. The bill defines "substantial violation" as a "serious and immediate" threat to health, safety, or property of the park owner or other resident; or a behavior which, after written notice and opportunity to cure, materially impairs others' use of the park or willfully and repeatedly disregards lease rules. Page 7, lines 9-19.

SB 729 requires written notice to the resident detailing the specific reason for loss of Qualified Resident status. This notice must be issued 90 days ahead of lease expiration and provide the resident the opportunity both to meet with the park owner to review the asserted grounds for revocation of status and to present mitigating factors warranting reconsideration.

<i>Citation</i>	<i>Current Standard</i>	<i>New Standard</i>
§ 8A-202(b)	Qualified status lost based on "repeated violation" (undefined)	Requires "substantial violation" defined as: (I) serious/immediate threat to health, safety, or property; or (II) continuing behavior after written notice and opportunity to correct
	Qualified status lost based on untimely payments	Removes payment history as basis for loss of Qualified status
	Qualified status lost if violation occurs within prior 6 months	Qualified status lost if violation occurs within the 6 months prior to expiration.

D. Enhanced notice requirements

SB 729 rigorously strengthens notice to residents of non-renewal, rent increases, and other adverse actions.

<i>Citation</i>	<i>Current Requirement</i>	<i>New Requirement</i>
§ 8A-202(a)	Month-to-month termination (implied 30 days)	90 days' written notice
§ 8A-202(b)	Qualified Resident renewal offer 30 days before expiration	90 days before expiration

§ 8A–202(b)	Statement of non-renewal reason within 5 days after decision	Written notice at least 90 days before expiration
§ 8A–202(j)	Rent increase notice 60 days before expiration (1-year renewals only)	90 days before rent increase (all residents)

E. Protection from unfair rules and retaliation

SB 729 increases protection of mobile home residents from selective enforcement of park rules and retaliation. While Real Prop. § 8A–1502 already bars park owners from enforcing unconscionable rules or lease requirements, this bill establishes a rebuttable presumption of unconscionability where a rule is “not applied uniformly to all residents” or is “enforced inconsistently or arbitrarily by the park owner.” Additionally, SB 729 adds arbitrary or inconsistent enforcement of park rules against a resident as a retaliatory act in the existing anti-retaliation provisions at § 8A-1301.

Senate Bill 729 supports the stability of Maryland Legal Aid’s clients

Our client in Harford County lost her Qualified Resident status after falling behind on payments. Her car had broken down, causing her to miss work. Although she caught up on the lot rent, the park owner had already sent her a Notice to Vacate and refused to reconsider. The dispute led to a Tenant Holding Over action. Because current law allowed her loss of Qualified Resident status based on payment history alone, our client was renting the lot on a month-to-month basis and subject to termination on 30 days’ notice. After the court issued a warrant, our client had five weeks to find a buyer for her mobile home before eviction. She could not move it off the lot in part because she was hospitalized. Although she negotiated a sale, the buyer was rejected by the park owner. As the eviction date neared, the park owner offered \$1,500 to our client to take ownership of the mobile home. With next to no bargaining power, she accepted the paltry sum. SB 729 would have protected our client from loss of Qualified Status, preventing the eviction and exploitative sale of her home. Even with loss of status, our client would have had more time – 30 days after eviction – to find a buyer, and in a sale to the park owner, she would have been entitled to the appraised value of the mobile home.

For all the above-stated reasons, Maryland Legal Aid urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 729. If you have any questions, please contact:

Zafar S. Shah
 Advocacy Director for Human Right to Housing
 zshah@mdlalab.org | (410) 951-7672

Final Rob's Tenant Rights upload copy testimony S

Uploaded by: Robin (Rob) Ross

Position: FWA

Tenant Rights SB 279 HB 1571

Good afternoon, ??, Vice Chair and EEE (education, energy environment) Committee Members, and Judiciary Committee Members

For the record my name is Robin Ross, I reside in Lothian, Md in one of the four mobile home parks – Patuxent Mobile Home Community sometime referred to as Patuxent Shores in Anne Arundel County

I am here representing myself – and other residents within the mobile home parks to urge you to vote for and in favor of HB1571 and SB0729 – Real Property – Access to Counsel in Evictions Programs – Mobile Home Parks

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee on SB729 (and HB1571) on behalf of myself and other mobile home park residents and we strongly support this amended bill.

I also want to thank Senator Shaneka Henson and Delegate Marvin Holmes for bringing this bill before the Senate / House committees in our great state of Maryland, on behalf of their constituents.

I am going to share with you the situations that I myself and residents are subjected to by park owners and what we experience which also occurs within other similar communities. What is important to realize is that while we live in “mobile homes” – they are not as “mobile” as you might think or would believe. These large manufactured homes – are placed on pad and footers in privately owned communities that have gone for years as regulated as “mobile home parks.” To move one of these homes is often as expensive as it is to purchase a used one costing upward of and in many cases in excess of 20k.

Tenants in these parks – or communities either purchase outright a unit from a previous owner, or sign a lease to rent. At the same time, while they may own the unit they live in – they must rent the ground space (the dirt) from the park owners that the unit is placed on. Park owners not only charge for the pad space, but residents are required to pay fees for unrelated repairs and subjected to

Tenant Rights SB 279 HB 1571

retaliatory evictions if payments were late -- ultimately impacting residents' economic ability to live in an affordable community. As land renters, we pay as much as \$812-\$1,500 or more in ground rent for their units with outrageous rent hikes in addition to high monthly costs for water/sewer service which for water is more times than not poor to undrinkable , and maintenance of community property – which does not materialize

Mobile home parks in Anne Arundel county and throughout the state are primarily privately-owned. Our research and all the research shows that the vast majority of these communities are owned by out of state investors whose goal is to increase their profitability. They commonly and routinely neglect the infrastructure in the community and residents needs as a general and common practice to move existing tenants out – and get in new ones to raise the rents.

Residents are typically only allowed a one-year unrenewable lease, which includes discriminatory illegal practices. Then they intentionally seek to push you to a month to month lease which they can terminate at any point for any reason. They speak of and claim park rules and standards that are not part of the written rules and more times than not, refuse to or do not provide the information to residents. Moreover, rules are not equally applied or enforced.

When we raise questions or voice concerns about rates or situations occurring in the park, we are further threatened with these false rule violations and eviction if we persist. Getting these unexpected and false notices of supposed rule violation comes with additional charges and without identifying the reasons or rules is highly stressful robbing residents of our peace and right to a quiet and enjoyable home.

You will not hear from the vast number of mobile home residents, for fear of retaliation – losing their homes – even if they own the unit. This is what happens. I myself was subjected to a 2 almost 3-year litigation with park owners over a

Tenant Rights SB 279 HB 1571

false claim of holding over after I refused to be bullied that cost me 10k and many sleepless nights.

The court issued a verdict in my favor – I do not and will never fear speaking out against what is wrong and unjust, and make no mistake, I am sure that I will face nefarious and retaliatory actions again due to my being here today. However, most of the residents in these parks cannot afford to spend the time or money for legal fees and are afraid of what I have had to endure and or becoming homeless.

Maryland laws protecting landlord-tenant relationships do not address the issues or give rights to those residing in mobile home communities. We are grateful for Senator Henson, the Maryland legal lab and other tenant advocates to get this legislation drafted.

Please approve this legislation – HB1571 – (SB279) to help us remain in our affordable homes and have rights to object to conditions affecting us financially.

Robin R. Ross

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin R. Ross". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

56 Patuxent Mobile Ests.

Lothian, MD, 20711

443-261-7017

MMHA - 2026 - SB 729 - Mobile Homes Parks - Access

Uploaded by: Aaron Greenfield

Position: UNF



Bill Title: Senate Bill 729, Real Property - Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks

Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: March 5, 2026

Position: Unfavorable

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 214,000 rental housing homes in over 1015 apartment communities. Our members house over 571,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 270 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

While we share the goal of housing stability and fair treatment for residents, SB 729 goes far beyond reasonable tenant protections and would fundamentally alter the legal and economic framework governing mobile home communities in Maryland.

First, the bill dramatically restricts property owners' ability to manage their communities. By narrowing eviction grounds to just three categories, creating broad cure rights, capping appeal bonds, and imposing an automatic 30-day delay after a warrant of restitution, the legislation makes it extraordinarily difficult to address serious lease violations in a timely manner. These provisions risk undermining community safety and place responsible residents at a disadvantage when bad actors cannot be promptly removed.

Second, the bill imposes sweeping rent and fee regulations. Ninety-day notice requirements, caps on utility charges, strict limitations on fees, and security deposit caps—combined with presumptions that certain fees are unreasonable—interfere with the basic economics of operating a community. These restrictions do not account for rising infrastructure costs, insurance premiums, property taxes, and utility expenses. Over time, this level of regulation will discourage investment in existing communities and make new development financially infeasible.

Third, the mandatory lease renewal requirements and expanded anti-retaliation and discrimination provisions, coupled with triple damages and attorneys' fees, significantly increase litigation exposure. At the same time, the expansion of the Access-to-Counsel program ensures that virtually every dispute will become more complex and prolonged, increasing costs for all parties and burdening the court system.

Additionally, the bill's "soft landing" provisions—requiring appraisal and purchase offers for homes and extended access rights—create operational and financial uncertainty that is unprecedented in landlord-tenant law.



Mobile home communities already operate under a distinct and highly regulated framework under Title 8A. SB 729 would make Maryland one of the most restrictive states in the country for this housing type, with the unintended consequence of reducing affordability and long-term housing supply.

For these reasons, we respectfully request an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 729.

Aaron J. Greenfield, MMHA Director of Government Affairs, 410.446.1992

sb729.pdf

Uploaded by: Will Vormelker

Position: UNF

HON. STACY A. MAYER
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
BALTIMORE COUNTY
CHAIR

HON. RICHARD SANDY
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MARYLAND JUDICIAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.
410-260-1523
RE: Senate Bill 729
Real Property – Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and
Mobile Home Parks
DATE: February 25, 2026
(3/5)
POSITION: Oppose, only as to the specific provisions noted below

The Judiciary has no opposition to the overarching objectives of the bill and appreciates the bill's expansion of access to counsel. The bill creates a statutory scheme for adjudicating disputes regarding rental agreements between mobile park owners and residents. It provides a number of safeguards to protect the rights of residents and prescribes remedies for a range of enforcement actions. These generally constitute public policy determinations which are the purview of the Maryland General Assembly. The Judiciary only opposes the specific provisions below.

The bill provides that when an appeal is noted from the District Court judgment, the District Court shall immediately enter an order directing the resident to pay all rent that comes due during the pendency of action into an escrow account of the clerk of the circuit court, an administrative agency that is empowered by local law to hold rents in escrow, or the park owner. Real Prop. § 8A-1705. The Judiciary traditionally opposes legislation that includes mandatory provisions and curtails judicial discretion. Additionally, to create an escrow account, especially to hold funds generated during the

pendency of an appeal, a circuit court clerk would normally need an order from a circuit court judge. The bill does not provide for such a process.

In addition, on page 35, lines 3 through 4, the bill requires the court to conduct a hearing within 30 days after certification of the status of the delinquent account. That timeline does not allow for the necessary notice to litigants nor for the Court to give meaningful opportunity for same. Additionally, as a separate branch of government, the Judiciary must retain the authority over docket management, including the scheduling of its cases. The Judiciary would request that the mandatory timeline be removed.

cc. Hon. Shaneka Henson
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor