



SB0729 – Real Property – Access to Counsel in Evictions Program and Mobile Home Parks
Hearing before the House Judiciary Committee
April 1, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

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 With Amendments report on SB 729 to protect the stability of Maryland’s mobile home residents.

SB 729, as amended in the Senate, aims to put mobile home park residents on the same footing as residential renters with respect to accessing legal representation in evictions. The bill clarifies that mobile home residents are “covered individuals” in the Access to Counsel in Evictions law. This definitional change will mean that the state’s 31,000 mobile home park households have the right to access legal representation in an eviction proceeding.

However, under Senate amendments, SB 729 is stripped of notice provisions that have been crucial to successful eviction prevention through the Access to Counsel in Eviction program. Namely, SB 729 is stripped of three provisions that are crucial to operationalizing the right to access counsel:

1. Requires legal service providers to assist mobile park residents “as soon as possible” after a park owner issues a notice to end the resident’s tenancy (page 4, lines 12-16); this timing requirement currently exists for residential renters, helping to ensure legal representation is available prior to the formal initiation of legal proceedings;
2. Requires the park owner to issue a Notice of Intent to File a Complaint for eviction based on non-payment of rent; presently, residential renters receive this type of notice, which informs them about the ACE law; and
3. Provides the mobile home resident with 10 days to cure non-payment of rent, after notice, before the park owner may initiate the eviction filing in court; this curing provision also exists for residential renters by virtue of the Access to Counsel in Evictions legislation in 2021.

Maryland Legal Aid urges the Judiciary Committee to improve these aspects of SB 729. We propose the amending language below so that SB 729 would give mobile home residents the same rights (access to counsel, pre-filing notice, right to cure) that the Access to Counsel in Evictions legislation (HB 18, 2021) gave to residential renters.

Proposed amendment language

The following amendments will restore the three missing provisions and put SB 279 on an equal footing with the Access to Counsel in Eviction legislation (HB18, 2021):

- Page 4, lines 12-16, remove strikethrough. This amendment restores the requirement to send a Notice of Intent to File in non-payment eviction cases.
- Page 27, line 28, remove strikethrough and brackets on “8A-1701.”
Page 27, lines 29-31, remove strikethrough. In line 31, after “rented” insert:

AFTER PROVIDING THE RESIDENT AND ANY KNOWN SUBTENANT WITH WRITTEN NOTICE OF THE PARK OWNER’S INTENT TO FILE A COMPLAINT UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION:

- (I) **ON A FORM DEVELOPED BY THE MARYLAND JUDICIARY;**
- (II) **IN THE MANNER SPECIFIED IN TITLE 8, SUBTITLE 4, SECTION 1(2)(I)-(II);**
- (III) **PROVIDING THE RESIDENT 10 DAYS FROM THE DATE THE RESIDENT RECEIVES THE NOTICE TO CURE THE NONPAYMENT; AND**
- (IV) **INFORMING THE RESIDENT ABOUT ACCESS TO COUNSEL IN EVICTIONS UNDER STATE LAW**

- Page 28, lines 1-25, remove strikethrough. On line 1, after “Whenever,” insert: **A RESIDENT HAS RECEIVED THE NOTICES UNDER SECTIONS 8A-1101(B) AND 8A-1701(A) OF THIS SUBTITLE AND HAS NOT TIMELY CURED NON-PAYMENT, AND THE**
- Page 28, line 8, after “costs,” insert:

(2) _____ (I) A COMPLAINT FOR REPOSSESSION FILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION SHALL INCLUDE A STATEMENT THAT STATES AND AFFIRMS THE DATE ON WHICH THE PARK OWNER PROVIDED THE NOTICE REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

**(II) A RESIDENT MAY CHALLENGE
ASSERTIONS MADE BY A PARK OWNER UNDER
THIS PARAGRAPH, AND THE COURT MAY
DISMISS THE COMPLAINT ON A SHOWING OF
SUFFICIENT CAUSE.**

- On page 38, line 30, after “2.” Insert:

AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(ii) On or before October 1, 2026, the Maryland Judiciary shall develop and publish on its website a form titled “Notice of Intent to File a Complaint for Park Owner’s Repossession of Rented Property” to facilitate the implementation of § 8A-1701(a) of the Real Property Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

(b) The form required under subsection (a) of this section shall include:

(ii) The date the notice is provided to the resident and a description of the manner of delivery of the notice;

(2) A description of the past due rent in dispute, including:

(i) The amounts of rent and late fees due to the park owner, excluding charges related to utilities, services, other fees, fines, or court costs; and

(ii) The specific periods of time to which the past due rent and fees correspond;

(3) A statement informing the resident that, on request of the resident, the park owner will promptly provide an itemized accounting of debits and credits;

(4) A statement containing information on rental assistance programs;

(5) The contact information of the park owner;

(6) A statement that the park owner may initiate an action for repossession in the District Court if the resident does not cure within 10 days after form notice is received and that the resident has the legal right to dispute the charges;

(7) A statement that the state requires access to legal representation for income-eligible mobile home park residents and information for nonprofit legal services organizations that may provide legal advice or access to legal representation to the resident, as compiled by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation; and

(8) Contact information for the following resources of the court:

(i) The Alternative Dispute Resolution Office; and

(ii) The Self-Help Center.

Mobile home residents face devastating consequences in the eviction process.

Seventy percent of Maryland’s mobile home residents are owners.¹ They 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 residential renters 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, 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

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.

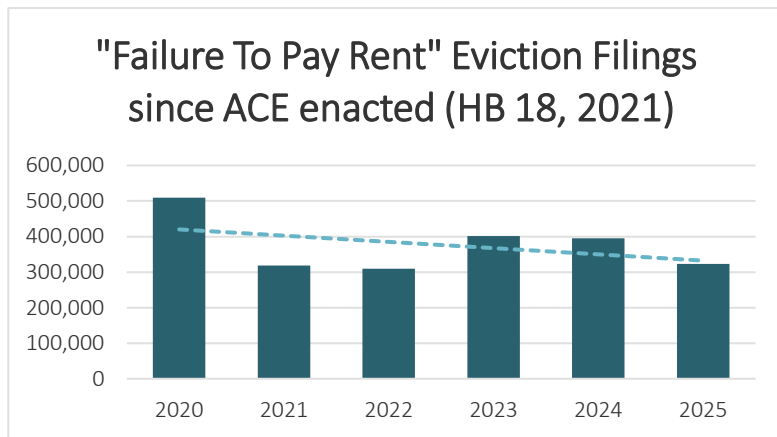
² U.S. Census Bureau, "Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units," *American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2504*, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S2504?q=United+States&t=Owner/Renter+\(Householder\)+Characteristics&g=010XX00US_040XX00US24](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S2504?q=United+States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

³ Private Equity Stakeholder Project, PESP Private Equity Manufactured Housing Tracker, <https://pestakeholder.org/pestp-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.

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



The Access to Counsel in Evictions law, combined with the Notice of Intent to File and the 10-day cure period, have reduced total “Failure To Pay Rent” eviction filings by 37% over the 2020-2025 period. SB 729 can provide for mobile home residents a similar mitigation against devastating consequences of eviction.

For all the above-stated reasons, Maryland Legal Aid urges the Committee to adopt our proposed amendments and to issue a **Favorable With Amendments** report on SB 729. If you have any questions, please contact:

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

⁶ *Supra* n.3.