

MARVIN E. HOLMES, JR.
Legislative District 23
Prince George's County

Environment and
Transportation Committee

Chair
Housing and Real Property
Subcommittee

Vice Chair
Rules and Executive
Nominations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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Testimony of Delegate Marvin E. Holmes, Jr.
In Support of House Bill 1571 (Cross-file of SB 729)
Position: Favorable

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of House Bill 1571, the House companion to SB 729. I am proud to sponsor this important legislation because it addresses a longstanding and often overlooked gap in Maryland housing law—one that directly impacts thousands of residents living in mobile home communities across our state.

This legislation is the result of troubling situations occurring not only in Maryland, but nationwide—situations that threaten the ability of residents in these unique communities to remain in the affordable homes they own or rent.

For years, the General Assembly has taken important steps to strengthen tenant protections regarding notice requirements, fees, and eviction procedures. However, residents of Maryland's nearly 437 mobile home communities—documented in a 2024 Penn State research study—have too often fallen outside the protections afforded to traditional landlord-tenant relationships.

These communities are primarily located in Southern Maryland, the Mid-Shore, Northeastern Maryland, and along the Eastern Shore. They are home to retirees, seniors on fixed incomes, veterans, county and state employees, working families, immigrants, and individuals with disabilities. Many residents fall at or below median income levels and rely on mobile home communities as one of the last remaining sources of naturally occurring affordable housing.

To illustrate, in Southern Anne Arundel County's Lothian area—a largely rural and agricultural region—there is a significant concentration of low-income households:

- **14% of households are classified as “very low income,” meaning a family of four earns less than \$58,050 annually.**
- **17% qualify under the county's rental workforce housing threshold, earning under \$50,000 per year.**

While 82% of the approximately 82,000 residents in that region live in single-family detached homes, nearly 20% of those homes are mobile or manufactured housing units located in four distinct communities: Maryland Manor, Patuxent Mobile Estates, Boones Mobile, and Lyons Creek Mobile. What distinguishes mobile home communities is their ownership structure. In most cases, private investors own the land and rent individual lots to residents. Even when residents own their homes, they must pay monthly lot rent, along with utilities and additional fees. Yet these residents often receive only one-year leases that may not be renewable and may contain unregulated provisions.

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Despite the fact that residents often own the structure they live in, existing landlord-tenant protections under federal and Maryland law largely do not apply. Maryland's Mobile Home Act, enacted in 1980, is now outdated and insufficient to address modern challenges.

Residents have reported infrastructure neglect, unexplained fee increases, utility upcharges, and retaliatory threats of eviction when concerns are raised. Because moving a manufactured home is extraordinarily expensive—and often impossible—residents are uniquely vulnerable. This creates a serious affordability gap and power imbalance that current law does not adequately address.

Maryland is not alone in confronting these issues. States including Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island have modernized their laws to better regulate landlord-tenant relationships in mobile home communities and to protect affordability.

House Bill 1571 is the product of a five-month workgroup that included legal aid attorneys, mobile home residents, and affordable housing advocates. The resulting legislation reflects careful research and thoughtful compromise. It includes:

- **Clearer Definitions** to clarify key terms, including “rent.”
- **Stronger Tenant Protections**, establishing explicit violation criteria and strengthening anti-retaliation safeguards.
- **Rental Agreement Reforms**, adding new prohibitions and clarifying existing standards.
- **Anti-Discrimination Safeguards** addressing discriminatory enforcement practices.
- **Fee and Utility Protections**, limiting unreasonable charges and unjustified utility markups.
- **Legal Consistency**, aligning security deposit and anti-discrimination provisions with broader Maryland law.
- **Improved Eviction Procedures**, protecting tenant property and clarifying subtenant processes.
- **Access to Counsel Coverage**, ensuring mobile home residents are included under Maryland's Access to Counsel in Evictions law.
- **Clear Jury Trial Rights**, defining procedures for dispute resolution.
- **Stronger Enforcement Mechanisms**, increasing accountability for non-compliance by park owners.

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This legislation does not seek to penalize responsible community owners. Rather, it creates fairness, transparency, and balance in a housing sector that has long operated with limited oversight. At its core, House Bill 1571 protects stability for Maryland families who have invested in their homes but do not own the land beneath them. It strengthens consumer protections, preserves affordability, and ensures that vulnerable residents are not forced out of their communities through unchecked practices.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on **House Bill 1571**.