

Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB691: Real Property-Landlord & Tenant-Reusable Tenant Screening Reports
Position: Favorable

February 24, 2020

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

Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances financial inclusion and economic justice for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

We are here today in strong support of SB691. SB691 allows tenants to use a reusable tenant screening report when applying for rental housing. This legislation could assist thousands of Maryland residents who have lost their job, seen their hours slashed, or their small businesses close. Thousands of Marylanders have lost income and are struggling to make ends meet. More than 367,000 Marylanders have contracted COVID-19, with 10% having symptoms for at least a month, and 2% having 'long-haul' symptoms for three months or more. Evidence is emerging that many survivors suffer long-term lung and heart damage, which will increase their medical expenses and may affect their ability to work.

At the same time, Maryland is facing a critical shortage of affordable housing and rental units. Even if an application fee is capped, paying a \$25 fee to 10 apartments adds up, particularly now when every dollar counts. SB601 meets this moment by enabling landlords to ensure that their screening questions are answered, without adding unnecessary costs to tenants.

This is a common-sense solution that addressing overly burdensome requirements for consumers, still meets landlords' needs, and reduces the cost for tenants.

For all of these reasons, we support SB691 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive Director