



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB0401 - Landlord-Tenant - Nonrenewal of Lease - Notice
Requirements
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
on February 9, 2021**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 401 extends the amount of notice a landlord is required to give a tenant before not renewing their lease, giving the tenant more time to find new housing.

The reason for this bill is simple. It would fix a loophole that has been brought to light because of the COVID-19 pandemic. While evictions may be halted by executive order or legislative act, landlords can circumvent these acts by simply allowing an individual's lease to expire without reason. Because this is a tool for landlords to avoid any eviction stays, the tenants should at least be awarded reasonable notice of their lease's nonrenewal.

This bill mandates varying notification lengths depending on the length of previous tenancy, type of lease, and type of residence. For example, under the bill a landlord would be required to provide notice to tenants who hold a annual lease at least three (3) months in advance; for tenants with month-to-month leases who have been in their home for more than two (2) years, the landlord must provide notice at least two (2) months; and for weekly leases, the landlord must give notice one (1) week in advance.

In addition to closing this loophole, the bill can be a benefit to both landlords and tenants. For landlords, the time period between the notice and the lease termination can give them the opportunity to fill

the vacancy. Therefore, the landlords will not have any lag time between tenants where they are missing out on extra income or even losing money. More importantly, this bill will benefit the tenants by giving them ample time to find new housing and help them avoid homelessness. Lastly, the state would not be fiscally burdened given that the notice requirements will not materially affect the state finances or operations.

The last thing Maryland needs right now is more of its citizens living on the streets, especially during the current pandemic. Senate Bill 401 would offer tenants slightly more time to figure out their living situation before facing homelessness. The changes proposed are straightforward, and will bring Maryland in line with the laws of other states; several states already require longer notification for a landlord's lease nonrenewal, including a 60 day requirement in Delaware, Georgia, and Vermont. If landlords are not going to renew the leases of vulnerable tenants, the very least they can do is give them fair warning because no Marylander should be thrown into homelessness with little to no notice.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 401.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill P. Carter