

Arielle Juberg  
Baltimore, Maryland  
District 8

Testimony in Support of Bill HB1312, COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021  
To: Chair Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee  
From: Arielle Juberg

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice in Baltimore and CASA de Maryland's Ally Network. I am testifying in support of HB1312, COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021.

In summer 2020, I appeared before the Baltimore County Council to support a rental protection bill that included limits on rent increases and late fees. During that session, numerous neighbors in Baltimore County testified about how the pandemic had pulled the rug out from under their feet, causing job losses, fewer hours, and smaller paychecks. I won't forget that one Baltimore County neighbor said that a \$50 late fee may not seem like much, but that money represented several days of groceries for her and her young children.

House Bill 1312 would extend the foreclosure moratorium, prohibit rent increases and late fees during the COVID-19 pandemic, allocate adequate budget funds to landlords to allow for rent forgiveness, provide statewide distribution of Know Your Rights information to tenants, and codify federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance.

Housing has been a cause and effect of poverty in Maryland since long before the pandemic. As Attorney General Brian Frosh recently told the Baltimore Sun, eviction is a "root cause" of poverty "that perpetuates a cycle that can last for generations."<sup>1</sup> As AG Frosh further explained, losing one's home "disrupts lives in profound and irrevocable ways. It means loss not just of a home, but also of possessions, of school, of community, employment, mental and physical health and the ability to find another place to live." The health and safety risks to people experiencing homelessness are always heightened, but this is even more true during the pandemic, when not having a home means not being able to socially distance from other people.

I support the COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act because all people in Maryland deserve the dignity of a safe and affordable place to live - especially during a global pandemic. I respectfully urge a favorable report for Bill HB1312.

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<sup>1</sup> Roberts, Angela. Maryland housing advocates, lawmakers discuss bills to reform eviction process, stem housing crisis. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/politics/bs-md-pol-eviction-process-housing-crisis-pandemic-press-conference-20201228-eabul6dwnbgzfhy12d4wqr5rbq-story.html>