



Bill Title: House Bill 523, Baltimore City – Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent – Registration and License Information

Committee: Baltimore City Delegation

Date: January 29, 2021

Position: Favorable

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities. Our members house over 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry including towing companies.

House Bill 523 requires a landlord, at the time of filing for complaint in an action for repossession for failure to pay rent in Baltimore City, to submit for inspection by the clerk of the District Court records demonstrating that the property is compliant with or exempt from local license requirements and lead-based paint abatement laws. This bill also prohibits a court from issuing a warrant if a tenant demonstrates through official records that the landlord has failed to register and license the property. During trial, the landlord has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence, that the property is in compliance with Article 13, Section 5-4 of the Baltimore City Code (Rental Registration) and Title 6, Subtitle 8, Part III of the Environment Article (Lead Certificate).

After working with the Sponsor, MMHA supports this bill which allows for a residential housing provider to provide an electronic rental registration license at the time of filing a Failure to Pay Rent proceeding. The rental registration database is publicly accessible and can be verified by the Court which ensures further transparency.

For the foregoing reasons, MMHA respectfully requests a **favorable report on House Bill 523.**

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