



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

Protect Senior Renters

HB449: Renter's Tax Credit Program Deadline Extension and Retroactive Credits

The Issue

Right now older, low-income renters in Maryland are facing rising housing prices. Older adults are often on fixed incomes and regularly face issues regarding reliable transportation, disability, and health. According to the National Council on Aging, over 15 million older adults aged 65+ are economically insecure, with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level.¹

In 2017, 34.95% of the State's 60+ low-income minority individuals lived in Baltimore City, followed by Prince George's (19.36%) and Montgomery (16.3%) counties. In 2017, 91,630 older Marylanders (7.56% of the total state 60+ population) lived in poverty as defined by the federal poverty guidelines. Minorities composed nearly half (49%) of the State's low income older adult population. HB 449 will benefit these elders².

Enabling older adults to age in place benefits these elders as well as their communities where many play a critical role in neighborhood stabilization. The Maryland Renters' Tax Credit Program addresses many of the financial security issues that older Maryland renters face. HB449 will expand on this successful program by making the tax credit retroactive..

The Solution

HB 449 allows Maryland renters who are at least 70 years old and eligible for the Renters Tax credits to claim those credits retroactively for up to three (3) years, which provides direct financial support for indigent older adults.

Since 2018, MCRC's SOAR (Securing Older Adult Resources) Program has screened hundreds of older adults for these tax credits. Our SOAR program has saved seniors an average of \$309 a year. The majority of clients who receive our support for the Renters Tax Credits are African-American women and

¹ <https://www.ncoa.org/article/get-the-facts-on-economic-security-for-seniors>

² <https://aging.maryland.gov/SiteAssets/Pages/StatePlanonAging/MD%20State%20Plan%202022-2025.pdf>



approximately 40% of the clients we help with this credit are disabled. Expanding the program to be retroactive can help save seniors even more.

In 2019, Maryland issued a little more than 8,200 credits and in 2020, a little more than 7,500 credits across the state³. While applying these credits retroactively will increase the cost to the state, this expansion is far less costly than providing food, shelter, and emergency assistance to displaced older adults.

Why HB 449 is important now

- In 2019, Maryland had the 8th highest number of renters who were cost-burdened, with 48.1 % paying more than 30% of their income for housing, while many are severely cost-burdened paying more than 50% for a rental.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the financial precarity of renters, particularly older adults. According to the United Way's 2021 COVID-19 impact survey, respondents below the ALICE Threshold were significantly more likely than respondents above the ALICE Threshold to say that they were concerned about paying housing expenses (47% vs. 13%).
- While eviction moratoriums were implemented at the beginning of the pandemic, many renters still face displacement as housing costs rise and their incomes remain the same. In 2021, 45% of our clients who are 60+ and seeking assistance through our tenants' rights program came to us with issues relating to eviction.
- Adults over the age of 70 years old should be protected from housing displacement and be allowed to remain in their homes in dignity - maintaining their intergenerational investment and strengthening the communities they live in.

What this HB 449 will do

- Protect older adult, low-income renters from housing displacement.
- Increase financial security for low-income older adults.
- Save taxpayers money by ensuring older adults remain housed and can age in place.

Vote YES on HB0449

³ https://dat.maryland.gov/Documents/statistics/AnnualRpt_FY2020.pdf



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition