

January 18, 2022

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THINK JEWISHLY. ACT LOCALLY.

**TESTIMONY ON HB101 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Landlord and Tenant - Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent - Lead Risk Reduction Compliance**

**TO:** Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Molly Amster, on behalf of Jews United for Justice

My name is Molly Amster. I am a resident of District 43 and am the Maryland Policy Director and Baltimore Director for Jews United for Justice (JUFJ). I am submitting this testimony on behalf of JUFJ in support of HB101, Landlord and Tenant - Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent - Lead Risk Reduction Compliance. JUFJ organizes 6,000 Jews and allies from across Maryland in support of local social, racial, and economic justice campaigns.

Since the beginning of Jewish history, when the Torah reports that Adam and Eve were expelled from their home in the Garden of Eden, the human need for housing has been central to Jewish thought. Jewish sacred texts recognize that having safe, stable housing is key to a healthy society, and we know that it is key to reducing racial inequities. These texts make clear that it is incumbent upon the landlord to provide safe housing for their tenants.

HB101 would ensure that District Court rent dockets throughout Maryland provide no safe harbor for landlords who operate in violation of the state Reduction in Lead Risk in Housing law and/or local rental licensing ordinances. Similar legislation passed in the House as recently as 2021.

This bill, like HB174, would effectively bar unlicensed, law-breaking landlords from taking advantage of the court's specialized, "summary" procedures for eviction for non-payment of rent. This bill goes one step further than HB174 by targeting non-compliance with Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) lead inspection requirements for rental housing.

By blocking law-breaking landlords' use of a taxpayer-funded collection process, this bill eliminates the financial incentive to ignore the public safety measures of MDE and city/county housing agencies. HB101 is a much-needed measure to boost the enforcement of lead inspection and rental licensing requirements, made easier with the new [MDE database](#).

**On behalf of Jews United for Justice, I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB101.**