



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 367

Landlord and Tenant – Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent – Rental Assistance Programs

*House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 8, 2022*

Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

211 Maryland

Advocates for Children and Youth

Baltimore Jewish Council

Behavioral Health System Baltimore

CASH Campaign of Maryland

Catholic Charities

Energy Advocates

Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Family League of Baltimore

Fuel Fund of Maryland

Health Care for the Homeless

Homeless Persons
Representation Project

Job Opportunities Task Force

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,
Inc.

League of Women Voters of Maryland

Loyola University Maryland

Maryland Catholic Conference

Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Maryland Community Action
Partnership

Maryland Family Network

Maryland Food Bank

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Paul's Place

Public Justice Center

St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore

Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

Julia Gross, Co-Chair

P: 410-528-0021 ext 6029

E: jgross@mdhungersolutions.org

Kali Schumitz, Co-Chair

P: 410-412- 9105 ext 701

E: kschumitz@mdeconomy.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports HB 367, which aims to make Emergency Rental Assistance distribution more efficient by ensuring applications are made to follow certain procedures that utilize federal funds, cover outstanding rent, and avoid any resort to litigation.

Although Maryland has unprecedented funding for eviction prevention, nearly 27,000 eviction cases were filed for non-payment of rent per month during the second half of 2021 resulting in 4,618 household evictions. In July 2021, the ratio of failure to pay rent eviction filings to households served by emergency rental assistance programs was nearly 9:1. While that gap has begun to close with scaled up efforts, eviction filings still outpace rental assistance distributions. As of January 2022, the US Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey (Week 41) showed that 62% of Maryland renters feel “very” or “somewhat” likely to be evicted in the next two months.

Emergency rental assistance need legal tools to help get the money out fairly.

HB0367 would do just that by ensuring rental assistance filers have 45 days to work on a rental assistance application before the landlord proceeds with filing an eviction action. This new legal tool, based on laws adopted in other jurisdictions, including nearby Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Virginia, would help local programs to distribute nearly \$400 million in remaining rental assistance funds.

The time for critical interventions in the rental housing arena is far from over. The General Assembly must act to bridge these Maryland household to local Emergency Rental Assistance Programs before they are subject to eviction proceedings.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 367.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.