



Senate Bill 592

Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Date: February 22, 2022
Position: Favorable with Amendment

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.

Senate Bill 592 (“SB 592”) requires housing providers to accept an electronic or written check issued by a political subdivision or on behalf of a governmental entity as a form of payment for the purposes of a tenant’s redemption right to the property. Based on the language in the bill, MMHA’s interpretation of the bill is that the electronic check or written check from the political subdivision or on behalf of a governmental entity as a form of payment would **not** require the signing of a contract. To ensure our interpretation is accurate, MMHA respectfully requests the following amendment:

On page 2, in line 5, insert, (3) IN SUBSECTION (G)(1), ACCEPTANCE OF THE ELECTRONIC OR WRITTEN CHECK ISSUED BY A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OR ON BEHALF OF A GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY SHALL NOT REQUIRE THE LANDLORD OR THE LANDLORD’S AGENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT.

Housing providers are entering into current rental assistance contracts because they were able to negotiate the contractual prohibitions and requirements as good-faith partners at the table with county officials and other stakeholders. Any requirement that housing providers enter into contracts would dispose of those good faith discussions, remove housing providers from the table, and subject housing providers to any number of future prohibitions or requirements that could be included in contracts. **For these reasons, MMHA respectfully requests adoption of the amendment to make it very clear that SB 592 does not impose a requirement to sign contracts on housing providers.**