

SB 100 -Unlicensed Landlords

Hello,

My name is Detrese Dowridge and I'm writing in favor SB-100. I've been a tenant organizer and advocate for years and have witnessed firsthand that landlords use rent courts to evict tenants when themselves are unlicensed while subjecting tenants to live in deplorable, unhabitual and unsafe conditions. As the bill states licensing laws protect public health and safety through periodic inspections. Like any other business, if a landlord wants to file suit in Maryland courts, they must be licensed in any jurisdiction that requires licensure.

Unfortunately, many tenants have been evicted without the knowledge that their landlord is unlicensed and unfortunately judges don't enforce this the way this should be enforced and because of this it encourages landlords to ignore licensing which increases evictions and tenants being subjected to health and safety hazards and displacement.

As a tenant myself I would like to see landlords licensed and held accountable for operating illegally and without a license. I'm quite sure landlords live comfortable in their homes and make the necessary repairs needed to their homes but what I cannot understand is why this same courtesy isn't extended to tenants they lease to. I'm quite sure landlords will counter by asking well why don't these tenants move? Well, it's not easy for some tenants to pick up and move especially tenants in low income communities or is living on minimum wage and landlords know this and take advantage of this.

If they (landlords) cannot keep their properties up to code, should they be allowed to operate unlicensed? Should they be allowed to use the courts to find loopholes to evict tenants illegally? Please ask yourself this and vote in favor of this bill.

Thanks

Detrese Dowridge

Lead Tenant Organizer

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