

SB100_Thomas Knoche_FAV

Hearing Date: 1/25/2023

Thomas Knoche, Board Member, Broadview Apartments, LLC

116 West University Parkway, Baltimore, MD 21210

TESTIMONY ON SB100 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Real Property – Actions to Repossess – Proof of Rental Licensure

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Thomas Knoche

My name is Thomas Knoche. I am part of the Broadview Apartments, LLC family ownership group. Broadview Apartments is in the 43rd District. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0100, Real Property – Actions to Repossess – Proof of Rental Licensure.

The Broadview Apartments, LLC owns 454 units of rental housing at the NE corner of University Parkway and W. 39th Street in Baltimore City, where approximately 1300 people are housed. I believe that all tenants should have decent, well-maintained housing in return for their rent.

I encourage the Maryland legislature to adopt SB0100 to protect tenants from illegally operating landlords that use eviction court to avoid eliminating code violations. All landlords should be licensed, and no tenant should be allowed to take occupancy of rental housing owned or operated by unlicensed landlords. No landlord is above the law, and all landlords should be treated equally under the law. Illegally operating landlords should not be able to operate, much less use the court's streamlined eviction processes. This undermines licensing laws meant to require inspections and protect public health and safety.

Licensing and regular inspections are necessary to ensure that rental housing meets code, is safe, and is clean and sanitary. Any loopholes that allow landlords to avoid inspections must be closed. This bill closes one significant loophole that allows unlicensed landlords to use eviction court to recover possession of property and lease it again without code compliance.

Post-pandemic shifts in the rental housing market have exacerbated the need for affordable housing. Many more tenants now experience hardship, paying more than the federal standard of 30% of income in rent. They have every right – at a bare minimum – to expect their landlord to be licensed, and for their housing to be fully functional and safe.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB100.