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TESTIMONY ON SB#0100 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Real Property – Actions to Repossess – Proof of Rental Licensure

My name is Deedee Jacobsohn and I live in District 16. I am a member of the SEA Change coalition at B'nai Israel Congregation, which is working for racial equity and social justice, although the opinions expressed here are my own. I am submitting this testimony **in support of SB0100: Real Property – Actions to Repossess – Proof of Rental Licensure.**

During the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, we “live” in a sukkah, a temporary dwelling or hut, for seven days. There are many ritual laws and spiritual goals for this observance. For me, one of the critical teachings is the importance of the contrast between a temporary dwelling and a permanent one. At the end of the holiday, we return to our permanent home. The holiday of Sukkot forces us to remember the plight of the homeless; it also obligates us to consider the equally devastating plight of those whose homes are plagued with mold, rodents, lack of heat, and other issues making them unfit for permanent habitation.

We face almost daily reminders in the news, on social media, and during public hearings, about the many people who are living in our own state in unsafe or unsanitary conditions. With a legally licensed landlord, there are ways, however inadequate, to compel them to make repairs. Illegally operating landlords face no such compulsion. Furthermore, they can ignore these basic health and safety laws while using our court system to evict tenants.

Illegally operating landlords have been granted a loophole to evict tenants in “Tenant Holding Over” cases. Last year, the Senate passed a bill to close this loophole but it was vetoed by then-Governor Hogan. I urge you to pass SB0100 and close this loophole. We need to remove the incentives that encourage landlords not to be licensed, and one way is to prevent illegally operating landlords from using our court system to evict tenants.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0100.