

Date of Hearing: January 25, 2023

Louise Weissman
Greenbelt, 20770

TESTIMONY ON SB0100 - 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: Louise Weissman

My name is Louise Weissman. I am a resident of Greenbelt in District 22. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB100, Real Property – Actions to Repossess – Proof of Rental Licensure.

I am a 31 year resident of Prince George's County. I am a member of Oseh Shalom in Laurel, MD, and participate in the Prince George's County Housing Justice Coalition. Several of the coalition partners participate in Renters United Maryland (RUM). I am writing about SB100 because I care about stopping illegally operating landlords who use the expedited eviction process that enables them to violate local rental licensing and inspection laws. Incidentally, I'm a retiree that lives in a rental unit, myself.

Jewish sacred texts recognize having safe, stable housing is key to a healthy society. We also know that safe, stable housing is key to reducing racial inequities. Our texts are full of conversation, laws, and traditions about the obligations of landlords and tenants. We are instructed to build homes that are safe, and to make sure that people can remain in their homes as long as they choose.

I grew up in rental apartments with my family for 17 years, for 6 years in one apartment in Boston, and then 11 years in a townhouse in the suburbs. For a variety of reasons, my parents didn't own a home until my last year of highschool, but they always made sure my sister and I grew up in a loving and healthy environment. My folks didn't worry about unreasonably escalating rent, surprise fees, or poor maintenance. They provided us with stability, a decent education in one school system in neighborhoods where everyone knew everyone, and adults watched out for neighborhood kids. I am conscious of my privilege, but I believe everyone deserves to be able to raise their families in decent, affordable housing, with safe environments.

For too long, Maryland has had an affordable housing crisis. The pandemic exacerbated that. While many were helped with emergency actions taken by the government, the pandemic continues, the protections have expired, and many are still confronting increased economic

hardship and skyrocketing rents, without the added confidence that would come with an eviction prevention policy.

Last year former Governor Hogan vetoed SB563, which would uphold rental licensing programs and prevent illegally operating landlords from using the expedited eviction process. No one should condone the need to repeat this conversation again, especially given the impact the lack of protections have on Maryland renters, particularly those in marginalized communities.

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