

March 29, 2023

Testimony on Senate Bill 100
Real Property – Actions to Repossess – Proof of Rental Licensure
House Judiciary Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1400 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We urge you to support Senate Bill 100, that is essentially the same as House Bill 36 that you have already approved.

Safe and secure housing is critical to the well-being of every family, and without it efforts to improve educational outcomes, assure healthy living conditions, and employment stability are jeopardized. At a time when rents are increasing dramatically, this is particularly important for those with lower incomes. Where localities that have a landlord licensing law, to protect public health and safety through periodic inspections, SB 100 would stop landlords who do not have an operating license from using streamlined court processes (Failure To Pay Rent, Tenant Holding Over, and Breach of Lease) to evict tenants. **Licensing laws Like any other business, if a landlord wants to file suit in Maryland courts, they must be licensed in any jurisdiction that requires licensure.**

Licensing laws in six (6) counties and other municipalities require landlords to pass a periodic a health and safety inspection. The vast majority of landlords comply with these laws. However, tenants whose predatory landlords refuse to make repairs, refuse to obtain a license, extract as much rent as possible, and when the tenant complains, move to evict them through one of Maryland's streamlined eviction processes. When unlicensed landlords successfully use eviction court, it encourages all landlords to ignore licensing laws and increases the risk of tenants being subjected to health and safety hazards.

For these reasons, we urge you to give Senate Bill 100 a favorable report.