



**Testimony HB 36
Judiciary Committee
January 17, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Clippinger & Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities. CDN envisions a state in which all communities are thriving and where people of all incomes have abundant opportunities for themselves and their families.

HB 36 is identical to SB 563 which was vetoed by Governor Hogan. HB 36 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) from evicting tenants in localities that have a licensing law. 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.

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. The number of Tenant Holding Over cases filed has risen dramatically during the pandemic – a 116% increase from FY 2018 to FY 22. Under current law, landlords in these cases may ignore basic health and safety laws and still use the taxpayer-funded court system to evict tenants. Maryland needs to take action to prevent unnecessary evictions throughout the state and keep vulnerable low income people in the homes they are living in.

Landlords have adequate tools to evict any tenant who would hold up repairs including lease provisions permitting them to enter the unit to address the issue when the tenant is not present, or to enter even if the tenant objects when they have to address emergencies or if the tenant is causing the code violation.

CDN is a member of the Renters United Maryland, a statewide coalition of renters, organizers, and advocates, and **we urge the Committee's report of Favorable on HB 36.**

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network