



**MARYLAND
LEGAL AID**

Advancing
**Human Rights and
Justice for All**

SB0100 - Real Property – Actions to Repossess – Proof of Rental Licensure

Hearing before the House Judiciary Committee on March 29, 2023

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) submits its written and oral testimony on SB0100 at the request of bill sponsor Senator Shelly Hettleman.

MLA is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal services to the State's low-income and vulnerable residents. Our 12 offices serve residents in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions and handle a range of civil legal matters, including defending tenants against eviction. MLA urges the Committee's favorable report on SB0100, which would block unlicensed landlords from using the courts' swift eviction procedures in most instances.

SB0100, as amended, is identical to amended HB0036, which recently passed this Committee and then passed in the full House by a vote of 101-34. In localities that have a rental licensing law, SB0100 would block unlicensed landlords from using streamlined court processes to evict tenants. 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.

Maryland Legal Aid, representatives from Renters United Maryland, and representatives of the multi-family industry negotiated a series of amendments to create exceptions in SB0100 for situations in which (1) the tenant's wrongful acts caused the licensing failure, (2) an error or delay by the licensing agency caused the licensing failure, or (3) the landlord acted in good faith to obtain a license but has been unable to do so because of a code violation in a unit unrelated to the eviction case. This compromise strikes a balance between the interests of tenants and landlords.

We urge the Committee to move SB0100 favorably with no new amendments. If you have any questions, please contact:

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