



Albert Turner
Attorney
Public Justice Center
201 North Charles Street, Suite 1200
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-625-9409, ext. 250
turnera@publicjustice.org

HB970 - Real Property - Residential Leases - Rent Increase Prohibition

**Hearing before the House Environment and Transportation Committee,
Feb. 27, 2024**

Position: FAVORABLE

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a nonprofit public interest law firm that stands with tenants to protect and expand their rights to safe, habitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing and their rights to fair and equal treatment by Maryland's landlord-tenant laws, courts, and agencies. We advocate changing the law regarding evictions and demanding the development of equitable and sustainable affordable housing. **We support HB 970.**

HB 970 reinforces the new Maryland law 2023 that requires a landlord to provide tenants with at least 60 days' notice – or 90 days' notice for a tenancy over one month – when the landlord intends to increase the rent. HB 970 would now prohibit a landlord from retaliating against their tenant in cases where they have not followed Maryland law by giving adequate notice of a rent increase. [Rents have skyrocketed since the start of the pandemic, increasing over 19% in the Baltimore area alone, with similar increases around the state.](#) Rapid rent increases destabilize families and result in evictions that can lead to homelessness and, short of homelessness, have significant collateral consequences such as forcing children to change school districts in the middle of the year, forcing families into unsafe or unhealthy housing due to lack of options, or losing a job that is no longer accessible by available transportation.

It is important to make sure that not only tenants have ample time ahead to plan for a rent increase, but in cases where the landlord does not follow the notice law, the tenant is protected against landlord retaliation actions such as lease non renewals. Without HB 970 a landlord who has not given 60 or 90 day notices of a rent increase against their tenant may be allowed to issue a retaliatory non-renewal of the lease if the tenant tries to invoke their notice rights. This bill is a much needed addition.

We urge the Committee to issue a Favorable report on HB 970.

Public Justice Center is a member of the Renters United Maryland coalition and asks that the Committee **issue a FAVORABLE report on HB 970.** If you have any questions, please contact Albert Turner, Esq., turnera@publicjustice.org (410) 625-9409 Ext. 250.