

Testimony Before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 7, 2024

SB 885 – Residential Leases – Termination Due to Medical Conditions

Support

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Committee on Aging, we would like to express our support for Senate Bill 885 – Residential Leases – Termination Due to Medical Conditions.

As social workers serving older Marylanders, we know that many low-to-moderate income seniors live in rentals, often alone. Many of them are one illness or accident away from being unable to care for themselves in that setting, often for the long term. A stroke, hip fracture or heart attack may require that they leave their home and move to another setting where they can receive the care they require. Often this means that they need to break their lease. In some cases, older adults in this situation are held liable for paying the rent for the remainder of their lease cycle, which could run into tens of thousands of dollars.

Currently, Maryland law limits the liability for breaking the lease for medical reasons, when the renter needs to move to a facility or institution, such as an assisted living home or a nursing home. However, the current law does not give this relief to those who move in with a family member or move to a community setting where they can receive help from a paid caregiver. This bill closes that gap by expanding the relief to these people.

We know that an older adult typically experiences a great deal of stress and a sense of loss when they suffer a serious medical event and need to move to receive care. The stress of this transition increases when the move becomes unaffordable. This bill reduces the financial pressure on older renters and others who need to break their lease for medical reasons.

For these reasons, we urge you to give a favorable report to SB 885.

Respectfully,

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