

Baltimore City Youth Action Board

SB0992 - Real Property - Landlord and Tenant - Procedures for Failure to Pay Rent, Breach of Lease, and Tenant Holding Over

Hearing before the House Environment and Transportation Committee,
March 7, 2024

Position: FAVORABLE

Peace & Blessings

The Baltimore City Youth Action Board believes Senate Bill 0992 is a critical measure to ensure that tenants have notice of their impending eviction date and a limited period of time to reclaim their personal possessions in case an eviction is executed.

The Baltimore City Youth Action Board is a Youth led board with lived experience. The YAB works to advocate for Baltimore City youth who may be experiencing homelessness.

Senate Bill 0922 is a bill that we believe can keep tenants who are experiencing financial difficulties from starting from ground zero. Oftentimes tenants who get behind on rent are evicted and do not get an opportunity to turn their situation around for the better. In many cases, we come across youth who are put into survival mode because of an eviction process that does not ensure the safety of tenants' property, that they were able to accumulate overtime. When a person is evicted, whoever lives with them is also evicted and in a lot of cases this includes children who have no control over their unfortunate circumstances. Many times during the eviction process youth tend to lose vital documents which puts them at risk of having their identity stolen and it makes it a lot more challenging to get housing resources.

Renters need and deserve reliable notice of the eviction date so that they can exercise their statutory right of redemption ("pay to stay") or make plans to leave the property with their belongings intact. Equally, Maryland renters (like most renters in the country) deserve a reclamation period after the eviction occurs, to mitigate the financial and personal loss that evictions cause. A "reclamation period" is a period post-eviction in which a renter can still gain access to their possessions such as life-saving medicine, electronics, and personal treasures such as photos, mementos, and heirlooms.

SB-0992 would 1) provide tenants notice 14 days in advance of their impending eviction dates; and 2) provide tenants the opportunity to reclaim whatever personal possessions are on the property for ten (10) days after the eviction occurs. This is a sensible bill that brings Maryland in line with the rest of the country on executing evictions.

Washington D.C., New Jersey, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia all require that the tenant be given notice of their eviction date and the opportunity to reclaim their personal possessions after their eviction. Moreover, nineteen states and D.C. require the tenant to be given notice of their eviction date, the opportunity to reclaim their personal possessions, and require the landlord to perform some duty to store the tenant's possessions during the time of holding. An additional nine

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is also beneficial to neighborhoods in that it no longer allows for an evicted tenant's belongings to be thrown out on public streets. Currently, in most of Maryland, a tenant's personal belongings are thrown into the street after an eviction, creating clutter that blocks sidewalks and creates public blight. B remedies this issue by requiring the landlord to discard whatever remaining items that are left in a proper and clean fashion.

Additionally, many jurisdictions currently require landlords to have a specific number of workers, equipment, and resources at the ready to conduct an eviction. Not only is this costly to the landlord, but in the event an eviction is redeemed, canceled, or postponed, the landlord loses money and resources. Instituting a reclamation period after an executed eviction means that landlords will no longer have to hire 5-6 workers to be present at each eviction. The landlord will now have more flexibility after the end of the 10-day period to dispose of any remaining belongings – without placing those belongings in the public way.

The Baltimore City Youth Action Board urges a favorable report on SB0992