



HEARING NOTES

Bill: 21-0022

Security Deposit Alternatives

Committee: Economic and Community Development

Chaired By: Councilwoman Sharon Green Middleton

Hearing Date: February 9, 2021

Time (Beginning): 3:05 PM

Time (Ending): 3:45 PM

Location: Virtual WEBEX

Total Attendance: 107

Committee Members in Attendance:

John Bullock Mark Conway Ryan Dorsey Antonio Glover Robert Stokes Odette Ramos

Bill Synopsis in the file? yes no n/a

Attendance sheet in the file? yes no n/a

Agency reports read?..... yes no n/a

Video or audio-digitally recorded? yes no n/a

Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? yes no n/a

Evidence of notification to property owners?..... yes no n/a

Final vote taken at this hearing? yes no n/a

Motioned by:.....Councilmember

Seconded by:.....Councilmember

Final Vote:.....

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Ms. Elena DiPietro, Department of Law
- Ms. Stephanie Murdock, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Mr. Bill Wells, Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC)
- Ms. Lisa O'Reilly

- Ms. Kathy Howard, Regional Management, Maryland Multi-Housing Association
 - Mr. Jordan Stein, Rhino
 - Mr. Matt Hill, Public Justice Center
 - Mr. Frank Boston, representative, Lease Lock Corporation
 - Mr. Christopher Grimm
 - Mr. Elam Boockvar-Klein, Jews United for Justice
 - Ms. Tisha Guthrie
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Major Issues Discussed

1. Councilwoman Middleton opened the meeting, introduced committee members and City representatives, and read the bill title and purpose into the record. She provided general comments about her sponsorship of the bill. Bill 21-0022 is part of a package of housing bills that were introduced to improve housing policy in Baltimore.
 2. Agency representatives testified in support of their respective agency reports.
 3. Elena DiPietro testified on behalf of the Law Department, which determined that the bill does not conflict with State law. The Law Department approved the bill for form and legal sufficiency.
 4. Mr. Bill Wells explained how security deposits work under certain HABC federally-funded programs. For public housing residents, rents are income based and security deposits are capped at \$50.00. HABC already offers installment payments for public housing residents. Renters that receive assistance through the Housing Choice Program, pay rents that are capped at 30% of their income, however landlords control leases and security deposits. HABC proposed that the bill be amended to exempt HABC.
 5. Public testimony was taken.
 6. Ms. O'Reilly asked
 7. whether security deposits could be used to pay late fees.
 8. Ms. Howard spoke in support of the bill with amendments. She indicated that security deposits should be clearly defined so as not to conflict with State law. She also suggested that the term "renters security insurance" should be clarified in the bill. She has submitted written testimony with proposed amendments.
 9. Mr. Jordan Stein testified in support of the bill because renters would be given options for paying security deposits and property owners would still be protected. He explained that other jurisdictions around the country (Cincinnati, OH, and Atlanta, GA) have implemented similar legislation.
 10. Mr. Hill testified in support of the bill with amendments. He expressed concern about a renter's abilities to file counter-claims to contest security deposit disputes.
 11. Mr. Frank Boston spoke in favor of the bill with an amendment. He was asked to submit written testimony outlining his company's position and proposed amendment. Mr. Grimm also testified in support of the bill with amendments.
 12. Committee members commented on the bill.
 13. The hearing was recessed.
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Further Study

**Was further study requested?
If yes, describe.**

Yes **No**

Committee Vote:

Sharon Green Middleton, Chair:
John Bullock:
Mark Conway:
Ryan Dorsey:
Antonio Glover:
Robert Stokes:
Odette Ramos:

Jennifer L. Coates, Committee Staff

Date: February 16, 2021

cc: Bill File
OCS Chrono File