

March 26, 2024
Briana Ciccarino
Baltimore, MD 21202

TESTIMONY ON 23-0357
Strengthening Renter Safety Act

TO: Vice President Middleton and members of the Economic and Community Development Committee

FROM: Briana Ciccarino

My name is Briana Ciccarino and I am a resident of District 12. I am submitting this testimony on 23-0357: The Strengthening Renter Safety Act.

I proudly work, live, volunteer, attend church, and advocate in Baltimore City. I am a licensed social worker having obtained both my undergraduate and graduate degrees from institutions in Baltimore City. I currently work with city residents to prevent evictions and utility shut offs. My social work and Catholic values move me to also advocate for social justice issues I care about including renters' safety.

In interactions with clients, neighbors, and referrals in the community, I hear many stories of families living in terrible living conditions. One family I met has a higher than normal monthly BGE bill because their landlord will not fix multiple issues. They live with little insulation in their walls, uneven door frames that let air in and out, and worst of all, they have had to kill rats in the home due to the landlord's non responsiveness to the issue. Their living conditions are unsafe, unhealthy and are unacceptable. The Strengthening Renter Safety Act will help people like this family by creating a formal complaint process for Baltimore City renters when the landlord has a faulty or fraudulent rental license, a process that does not exist yet. The SRSA will also ensure current and prospective tenants understand their rights by notifying them if a building is unlicensed and requiring that landlords actually distribute the results of inspection reports to the tenants.

Our neighbors who rent in Baltimore City deserve better than a system under which landlords can take advantage of an overworked Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community which needs more resources to manage 311 reports and the licensing program. The Strengthening Renter Safety Act is a much needed and long awaited step toward remedying some of the inequities renters in our City experience every day and I ask for your favorable report.

Briana Ciccarino
Mt. Vernon, Baltimore City Resident