



HEARING NOTES

Bill: 21-0031

Landlord-Tenant - Lease Renewals

Committee: Economic and Community Development

Chaired By: Councilwoman Sharon Green Middleton

Hearing Date: May 18, 2021

Time (Beginning): 2:00 PM

Time (Ending): 2:32 PM

Location: Virtual WEBEX

Total Attendance: ~28

Committee Members in Attendance:

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

Bill Synopsis in the file? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Attendance sheet in the file? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Agency reports read? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Video or audio-digitally recorded? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? [] yes [] no [X] n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners? [] yes [] no [X] n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Motioned by: Councilmember Dorsey
Seconded by: Councilmember Ramos
Final Vote: Favorable with amendment

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Councilmember Odette Ramos
Ms. Nikki Thompson, Office of the President

- Mr. Aaron Degraffenreidt, Office of the President
 - Ms. Hilary Ruley, Law Department
 - Ms. Stephanie Murdock, Department of Housing and Community Development
 - Ms. Nina Themelis, Office of the Mayor
 - Ms. Jeanine Dunn, Housing Authority of Baltimore City
-

Major Issues Discussed

1. Councilwoman Middleton opened the meeting, introduced committee members and City representatives, and read the bill into the record.
2. Ms. Nikki Thompson presented amendments from the Office of the President. Councilman Conway asked if the bill is retroactive. Ms. Thompson explained that the scope of bill is not retroactive, however, more substantive work can be done on the issue moving forward.
3. Ms. Stephanie Murdock presented amendments from the Department of Housing and Community Development that would remove language related to enforcement by environmental citation. She emphasized that a tenant would not be prohibited from pursuing civil and criminal remedies.
4. Councilmember Ramos presented amendments to those offered by the Office of the President.
5. Ms. Hilary Ruley testified she had no legal issue with the amendments. Approval of the bill does not change the Law Department's unfavorable report, which states that the bill is preempted by State law. However, due to the pandemic there is no firm view on how the courts would address a challenge.
6. Mr. Aaron Degraffenreidt explained that previous challenges to similar laws were not during a pandemic. A similar case occurred about 50 years ago. Recent rulings on related cases during the pandemic have survived challenges. The amendments should help to strengthen and protect the law.
7. Councilmembers Stokes and Dorsey asked about the impact of the Governor's order on the 90 or 180-day timeframe for termination of emergency measures. It was explained that there is nothing to stop the Council from going beyond 90- or 180 days.
8. The committee approved all amendments for the bill.
9. The committee voted to recommend the bill favorable with amendments.
10. The hearing was adjourned.

Further Study

Was further study requested?
If yes, describe.

Yes No

Committee Vote:

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

Jennifer L. Coates, Committee Staff
cc: Bill File
OCS Chrono File

Date: May 19, 2021