

Coates, Jennifer (City Council)

From: Middleton, Sharon (City Council)
Sent: Thursday, March 11, 2021 8:50 PM
To: reneejorsch@gmail.com
Cc: Coates, Jennifer (City Council)
Subject: Re: Thanks for supporting renters!

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Thank you for your supportive testimony. It will be added to the bill file.

Sharon Middleton

From: reneejorsch@everyactionadvocacy.com <reneejorsch@everyactionadvocacy.com> on behalf of Renee Jorsch <reneejorsch@everyactionadvocacy.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 11, 2021 7:38:26 PM
To: Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Thanks for supporting renters!

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Dear Council Vice President Sharon Green Middleton,

I am writing as your constituent to thank you for supporting renters in Baltimore City, by introducing legislation that will make it easier for renters to secure housing, and to stay in their homes. As you know, before the pandemic, 57% of renting households in Baltimore City were considered housing cost burdened, spending more than a 30% of their income on housing. For one third of all renters in Baltimore, housing costs exceed 50% of their income. These figures are very likely to be much worse now in the midst of the pandemic. We need to help Baltimore residents secure housing, and stay in their homes, and CB21-0021 and CB21-0022 will both help achieve this goal.

If passed with the Council President's amendments, CB21-0021 will require landlords to implement a ten-day grace period for late fees. Furthermore, for those who receive a monthly government benefit such as SSI or SSDI, CB21-0021 will require landlords to offer the tenant a 10-day grace period starting from the date the benefit is paid or mailed. This will ease some of the financial burden many renters are facing. I support CB21-0021 with the Council President's amendments, and I urge you to as well.

If passed, CB21-0022 will allow for renters to provide alternatives to a traditional security deposit. I and the Baltimore Renters United coalition want to see this bill amended to only allow for an option to pay security deposits as installments, and to remove the option for security deposit insurance and surety bonds. Paying a security deposit in installments will make housing more accessible for more Baltimoreans, and will help ensure that security deposit rates cannot be used as another form of red lining. However, including the option to buy insurance or a bond in lieu of a security deposit should not be included in the bill. These new types of insurance are predatory, and unlike a security deposit, renters don't get their money back at the end of the tenancy and could be sued for property damage with less protection than if a landlord sued them. The Better Business Bureau also reflects the poor practices of these types of businesses. I urge you to support CB21-0022 with the amendment to strike the provisions that allow corporations to prey on renters.

As your constituent, I would like to thank you again for your work on CB21-0021 and CB21-0022, and ask that you

advocate for the bills in their strongest form.

Sincerely,
Renee Jorisch
2206 Gordon Rd Baltimore, MD 21209-4706
renejorisch@gmail.com