



HEARING NOTES

Bill: 21-0097

Emergency Security Deposit Relief Act

Committee: Economic and Community Development

Chaired By: Councilwoman Sharon Green Middleton

Hearing Date: June 29, 2021

Time (Beginning): 2:00 PM

Time (Ending): 2:30 PM

Location: Virtual WEBEX

Total Attendance: ~37

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.)

- Councilmember Sharon Middleton
- Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Department
- Ms. Tisha Edwards, Mayor’s Office of Family Success

- Ms. Stephanie Murdock, Department of Housing and Community Development
  - Mr. Pedro Aponte, Department of Finance
  - Ms. Alice Kennedy, Department of Housing Community Development
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### **Major Issues Discussed**

1. Councilwoman Middleton opened the meeting, introduced committee members and City representatives, and read the bill into the record.
2. Ms. Elena DiPietro presented the Law Department's report. She discussed legal requirements for disbursement of funds from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). She emphasized the need to comply with Baltimore City's Charter, which authorized AHTF. She indicated that eligibility requirements for participation in the proposed Security Deposit Program, as expressed in the bill, are not the same as the eligibility requirements for recipients of funds from the AHTF. She suggested amending certain definitions. She also indicated that, according to AHTF guidelines, all rental properties that receive assistance from the trust fund must have a minimum affordability period of at least 30 years. She also wanted more information about the use of security deposit funds once a tenant leaves a property.
3. Ms. Tisha Edwards testified that the Mayor announced a similar initiative that will begin in September 2021 to help make security deposits accessible to families who are seeking housing stability. She indicated that the aim is to access existing City resources for funding of the security deposit initiative. The administration would like to see one rental assistance program with a viable funding stream. Funds from state and federal resources, which are time sensitive, can be used to fund the initiative. The administration has worked directly with landlords. In addition, the security deposits should not be seen as additional income.
4. Ms. Stephanie Murdock presented the Department of Housing and Community Development's report. She indicated concerns regarding use of AHTF funds, but DHCD supports use of federal funds. She also discussed a proposed amendment which would require that payments be made directly to landlords, on behalf of the tenant, in order to prevent misuse of funds. DHCD also recommended that rental properties should be registered with the State's Department of Housing and Community Development. Additionally, she indicated that a conversation is needed to discuss the time period for use of funds and for requesting extensions.
5. Mr. Pedro Aponte presented the Department of Finance's report. Although the Department of Finance is opposed to the bill, as proposed, the agency would like to see amendments which address the funding source. Finance's preference is that federal funding be used and that AHTF funding serve as a backup.
6. Councilmember Glover asked why landlords must register because some people who are in need of funds may not be renting from a landlord that is registered. DHCD will assist with registering landlords. Rental licensing is required by law to legally rent to a tenant. Ms. Tisha Edwards indicated that rental assistance is being provided to landlords that rent to tenants, which gives tenants protections from unlicensed properties. Requiring the license helps to protect the tenant and stabilizes housing.
7. The hearing was recessed. A works session will be scheduled at a later date.

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**Further Study**

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

Yes  No

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**Committee Vote:**

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

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

Date: July 1, 2021