SUPPORT HB693/ SB481

Governor’s Renters’ Rights and Housing Stabilization Act of 2024

The Governor’s Renters’ Rights and Housing Stabilization Act of 2024, HB693/ SB481, is the only mechanism during the 2024 legislative session to fund civil legal aid. There is an urgent need for $14.6M in funding to implement the ACE law and the other life-saving work of civil legal aid organizations. The bill raises the filing fee in eviction cases, prohibits the pass through of the fees to the tenant, and uses 50% of the revenue generated from increased fees to fund MLSC and civil legal aid.

We urge a FAVORABLE VOTE on the bill and to

- keep the fee increase to $100;
- prohibit passing the fee to the tenants; and
- retain 50% of the revenue for MLSC to fund civil legal aid to ensure $14.6M in urgent funding.

HB693/ SB481

Funds Civil Legal Aid

The Governor’s Renters’ Rights bill is the ONLY vehicle for funding civil legal aid during this legislative session. Civil legal aid funding in the amount of $14.6M is urgently needed to continue to implement the Access to Counsel in Evictions law and support all the other life-saving programs funded by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC).

Investing in civil legal aid keeps Maryland families housed, safe and economically secure; provides a $6 ROI for every $1 invested; and works to correct racial and other inequities in the civil justice system. Civil legal aid lawyers help Marylanders prevent evictions, defend against illegal debt collection, access life-saving public benefits, and ensure families remain together and stay safe from violence.

Increases Filing Fees in Eviction Cases and Prohibits Passing the Increased Fee to Tenant

The bill increases the filing fee in eviction cases from a national low of $15, to the national average of $100 and prohibits that increased fee from being passed on to tenants. The increase in fees, in turn, is used to fund civil legal aid. The filing fee increase also helps vulnerable Marylanders by tackling Maryland’s aberrantly high eviction filing rate. The current low rate harms tenants by ensnaring them in a non-stop cycle of debt, while courts and sheriffs offices incur mounting costs to process and administer hundreds of thousands of these cases, even though 95% of them do not end in an eviction.