

Sayers, Margery

From: Lisa May <lisavm78@vt.edu>
Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 3:13 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: HCAR Comments on CB 14-2021
Attachments: HCAR Comments on CB 14-2021.pdf

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Good afternoon,

On behalf of the Howard County Association of REALTORS, please see our attached comments in support of CB 14, amending the County's landlord and tenant provisions.

We greatly appreciate Council Member Yungmann's efforts to reach a consensus on this legislation and ask for your support.

If we can provide any additional information, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Sincerely,

Lisa May
HCAR Government Affairs Director



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February 4, 2021

The Honorable Liz Walsh, Chairperson
Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

RE: CB 14-2021, Landlord-Tenant Relations

Chairperson Walsh and Members of the Council,

On behalf of the Howard County Association of REALTORS® (HCAR), an organization representing over 2,000 real estate professionals, we write to offer our support for CB 14-2021.

HCAR worked closely with the prior County Council on CB 20-2018, which instituted several new provisions within the County's Landlord-Tenant article. While that legislation was not perfect, it reflected a compromise which attempted to balance and respect the rights of both tenants and landlords in the County. It also attempted to account for all types of rental units, from the large apartment complex to the single-family residence. While that effort was largely successful, HCAR believes there is room for improvement.

As CB 20-2018 has taken effect, we have heard from rental owners and property managers that some of the title's provisions have been difficult to consistently implement as written, particularly for individual rental unit owners. These include providing evidence of the rental license, allowing for viewings and inspections of the rental unit on offer, and providing copies of the Tenant Assistance publication in additional languages. The amendments proposed in CB 14 provide practical ways for landlords to ensure compliance with the Act.

CB 14's other amendments allow rental owners to recover costs and financial losses they may incur during a tenancy. While there are certainly instances of landlords not meeting their obligations to tenants, there are unfortunately also tenants who cause financial harm to their landlords and damage their rental dwellings. In those instances, if a rental property owner cannot be made whole or believes that the risk of loss is too high, they will cease to be rental property owners. That results in fewer housing options and higher rental costs for Howard residents.



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Finally, CB 14 adjusts the requirements for a tenant to terminate a lease agreement due to an involuntary change of employment. While generally REALTORS® believe that tenants should abide by their contractual obligations, we recognize that there are at times circumstances beyond their control which create a demonstrable hardship. The new CB 14 standard of adding to a tenant's current commuting distance strikes an appropriate balance in this regard.

HCAR supports CB 14-2021 as a modest adjustment to existing rental property regulations which will both aid landlord compliance and assure the continued supply of rental housing options in the County. We ask for your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Shirley Matlock, CRS, ABR, ASP, CNE, EcoBROKER, ePRO, GRI, LTG, MRP, PMN, SFR, SRES
President
Howard County Association of REALTORS®