



SB0910 – COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021

Presented to the Hon. Sen. Will Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 2, 2021 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee a **favorable report on SB0910 – COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021**, sponsored by Senator Will Smith.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. As part of our efforts to protect reproductive freedom for all Marylanders, we work to ensure every individual has the right to decide if, when, and how to form their families, and to parent in good health, in safety, and with dignity. The ability to secure stable [housing is correlated closely with good health](#), and is critical to ensuring people are able to adequately plan for and raise their families in safe environments. This bill expands Governor Hogan's and the Centers for Disease Control's orders to protect tenants from eviction and provides financial relief to landlords, preventing more individuals and families from experiencing the trauma of eviction, homelessness, and housing insecurity. People experiencing homelessness risk being subjected to unexpected sexual contact or become more vulnerable to sexual victimization, resulting in higher rates of unintended pregnancy and miscarriage, as well as STI and HIV transmission.¹

Maryland's eviction filing rates are one of the highest in the country with more than 660,000 eviction cases filed every year.² In some counties, the filing rate is over 100%, which means that there are more eviction actions brought to court than there are homes for rent.³ Landlords routinely use [screening policies](#) that deny housing whenever an applicant was named in an eviction case, even when a court never ordered the eviction. This essentially creates tenant blacklists which disproportionately impact [Black and Brown communities](#), especially women with children. This bill will prevent more tenants from being placed in this discriminatory system which can potentially have intergenerational impacts and perpetuate cycles of poverty.

Stable housing is an essential component of reproductive justice in allowing families to live in a safe and secure environment, in which an individual's right to bodily autonomy is better protected. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on SB0910 – COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Begun, S. "The paradox of homeless youth pregnancy: A review of challenges and opportunities." *Social Work in Health Care* (2015) 54 (5):444–60. doi:10.1080/00981389.2015.1030058.

² Leckrone, Bennett. "Chief Judge: Eviction Filings Face Court Backlog," September 9, 2020. <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2020/09/09/chief-judgeeviction-filings-face-court-backlog/>.

³ "Eviction Map & Data." Eviction Lab, n.d. <https://evictionlab.org/map/#/2016?geography=states&bounds=-81.682,36.74,-72.797,40.638&type=efr&locations=24,-77.268,38.817>.