

HOUSE BILL 420

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CF SB 480

By: **Delegates M. Washington, Cullison, Fennell, Glenn, Lafferty, Lierman, McCray, Morales, B. Robinson, S. Robinson, and Tarlau**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2015

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Commission on Rental Housing Stabilization**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Commission on Rental Housing Stabilization;
4 providing for the composition, chair, and staffing of the Commission; prohibiting a
5 member of the Commission from receiving certain compensation, but authorizing the
6 reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Commission to investigate certain
7 strategies for stabilizing rental housing conditions in the State, evaluate the
8 experiences of certain tenants in Maryland, evaluate the experiences of other states
9 and jurisdictions in taking action to stabilize rental housing conditions, and make
10 specific recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the Commission to
11 report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly
12 on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally
13 relating to the Commission on Rental Housing Stabilization.

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
15 That:

16 (a) There is a Commission on Rental Housing Stabilization.

17 (b) The Commission consists of the following members:

18 (1) two members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of
19 the Senate;

20 (2) two members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of
21 the House;

22 (3) the Attorney General, or the Attorney General's designee;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (4) the Secretary of Housing and Community Development, or the
2 Secretary's designee; and

3 (5) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

4 (i) two representatives from nonprofit organizations that represent
5 the interests of residential landlords in Maryland, of which:

6 1. one shall represent a rural area of the State; and

7 2. one shall represent an urban area of the State;

8 (ii) two representatives from nonprofit organizations that represent
9 the interests of tenants in Maryland, of which:

10 1. one shall represent a rural area of the State; and

11 2. one shall represent an urban area of the State;

12 (iii) one representative from the Center on Budget and Policy
13 Priorities;

14 (iv) one lawyer admitted to the Maryland Bar who has experience
15 representing clients in landlord-tenant proceedings in the State; and

16 (v) one representative of the Maryland Judiciary with expertise in
17 landlord-tenant proceedings.

18 (c) The Governor shall designate the chair of the Commission.

19 (d) The Department of Housing and Community Development shall provide staff
20 for the Commission.

21 (e) A member of the Commission:

22 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Commission; but

23 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State
24 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

25 (f) The Commission shall:

26 (1) investigate strategies for stabilizing rental housing conditions in the
27 State, including the possible need for:

1 (i) the establishment of a Maryland Rental Housing Authority as an
2 independent unit of State government to provide oversight of landlord–tenant issues in the
3 State;

4 (ii) the establishment of an Office of the Tenant Advocate as an
5 independent unit of State government to:

6 1. provide tenants with free counsel concerning tenant
7 leases, State and local landlord–tenant laws, and interactions with landlords and the court
8 system; and

9 2. advocate for the interests of tenants generally in certain
10 judicial and administrative proceedings;

11 (iii) a separate system of regional housing boards to adjudicate
12 disputes between landlords and tenants; or

13 (iv) a statewide mechanism for limiting excessive rental increases;

14 (2) evaluate the experiences of different groups of tenants in Maryland,
15 including senior citizens, military personnel, minorities, disabled persons, families, and
16 tenants from different economic backgrounds;

17 (3) evaluate the experiences of other states and jurisdictions in taking
18 action to stabilize rental housing conditions; and

19 (4) if the Commission determines that it would be desirable to implement
20 any of the strategies listed in item (1) of this subsection, make specific recommendations
21 regarding the implementation of those strategies, including:

22 (i) the time frame for implementing the strategy; and

23 (ii) potential sources of funding to implement the strategy.

24 (g) On or before December 31, 2015, the Commission shall report its findings and
25 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1246 of the State
26 Government Article, the General Assembly.

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
28 1, 2015. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June
29 30, 2016, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be
30 abrogated and of no further force and effect.