



**Howard County Council
Public Hearing Testimony
April 16, 2017**

Council Bill 20-2018

The Association of Community Services supports the intent of Council Bill 20-2018 to enhance the capacity of the Office of Consumer Protection and other government entities abilities to protect Howard County tenant rights.

ACS reads this bill through two lenses. The first is from the perspective of the individuals served by its nonprofit member organizations, the majority of whom do not have the experience necessary to fully understand the requirements and ramifications of the application or lease they are signing, nor the alternatives available to them should they end up in a dispute with their landlord. Having County-required tenant rights within the applications and leases associated with County-licensed rental properties would be a major step in avoiding, or if necessary resolving, disputes.

The second lens through which ACS views the proposed legislation is on behalf of its nonprofit members who must work tirelessly to identify landlords willing to rent their properties to households that may have income or other rental barriers. In addition, some of our members are themselves landlords leasing units to low income, disabled or senior households. We need to continue to attract private landlords, not dissuade them from increasing the County's pool of affordable and accessible housing. And we should not create the unintended consequences of financial or administrative burden on already under-resourced nonprofits that provide and manage affordable and accessible housing units.

We encourage CB 20-2018 sponsors to talk with nonprofit representatives and private landlords to discuss the merits of and potential resolution to any concerns they may have about the legislation as proposed. ACS is appreciative of this effort to improve the County's protection of all, but particularly of economically or otherwise vulnerable tenants. We are equally interested in ensuring legislation that respects the mission and operational capacity of nonprofit landlords.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of ACS.

Respectfully,

Jackie Eng, Chairperson
ACS Public Policy Committee

