



**TESTIMONY TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**HB 0151: Real Property – Residential Leases – Notification of Rent Increases**

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Nancy Soreng, President**

**DATE: February 7, 2023**

The League of Women Voters of Maryland supports affordable housing programs targeted to geographic areas in Maryland with the highest levels of moderate-income and low-income residents. LWVMD also supports the change of state landlord/tenant laws to require a clearly written lease which states the rights and responsibilities of both parties. In addition, LWVMD supports actions to reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency.

HB 151 will strengthen tenants' rights and empower them to make congruent financial decisions after receiving a 120 days advance notice of an increase of more than 4% in their rent from a landlord.

Maryland is currently facing a housing crisis that affects severely low-income and moderately-income residents. According to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development by 2030, Maryland will have over 97,000 low-income households and a severe shortage of housing.

HB 151 will alleviate many families' concerns that landlords can increase their rent without providing adequate notification. This bill allows families the time to make decisions about applying their stretched resources to other costs.

In the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau we know that 25% of families are behind on rent. Maryland's Emergency Rental Assistance program will run out of money in May 2023. Without proper notifications many families will continue or begin to fall into this cycle of never being able to 'get ahead.' By enacting HB 151 landlords will be mandated to give tenants a minimum 120 days advance notice of a four percent or greater rent increase thereby allowing families more time to allocate their sparse resources to financially benefit their households.

LWVMD urges the committee to return a favorable report on HB 151.