



April 5, 2023

Dear Representative:

You have an opportunity to make history in Delaware this legislative session by passing SS1 for SB1, the bill to create a right to representation for low-income renters facing evictions. The “Right to Representation” bill would level the playing field by ensuring that low-income renters receive representation in their eviction cases, helping many avoid homelessness and creating cost savings for the state. We, the undersigned, support this common-sense fairness legislation which:

- Creates a right to representation for low-income renters facing eviction whose household income is lower than 200% of federal poverty guidelines.
- Requires landlords to provide notice of the right to representation at certain designated intervals of a tenancy and in eviction proceedings.
- Exempts small landlords who own three or fewer units and are not represented by a lawyer or agent.
- Creates an Eviction Diversion Program, which will be run by the Justice of the Peace (“JP”) Court, designed to help resolve payment or other issues after a landlord files for eviction.

This bill will provide critical assistance to low-income Delaware renters and help mitigate harmful effects of the housing crisis. Currently, most Delaware renters must navigate the complex eviction process by themselves. In our state, **86% of landlords have representation in court eviction proceedings but only 2% of renters do**, leading Delaware to have one of the highest eviction rates in the country.

The disruptive displacement that comes with eviction has **well-documented and long-lasting negative effects on the lives of children and families**, including poorer physical and mental health, increased risk of homelessness and loss of employment, and poorer academic performance. It disproportionately impacts Black and Latinx families and creates significant increased costs for our state and local governments.

Delaware should join the growing number of cities and states implementing a right to counsel (or representation) for renters facing eviction. Right to representation measures for renters in eviction proceedings have been enacted to date in three states — [Washington](#), [Maryland](#), and [Connecticut](#), and in fifteen cities including: [New York City](#), [San Francisco](#), [Newark, NJ](#), [Cleveland](#), [Philadelphia](#), and [Baltimore](#), and these measures work:



- **84% of renters** who had representation as a result of New York City's right to counsel law were able to remain in their homes, and the eviction filing rate has dropped 30% since funding for expanded representation began in 2014.
- In the first ten months after implementation in Connecticut, **the estimated cost savings to the state was between \$5.8-\$6.3 million.**
- In San Francisco, the **eviction filing rate decreased by 10%** in the first year, and of those receiving full representation, **59% stayed in their homes.**
- [A Stout report analyzing Cleveland's Right to Counsel](#) implementation found that **90% of those whose goal was to prevent eviction judgement or involuntary move was achieved.**

All Delawareans - regardless of their circumstances or background - should have a fair chance to remain in their homes when facing eviction. Please vote to pass SS1 for SB1.

Respectfully,

The Following Delaware Organizations

[American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware \(ACLU-DE\)](#)

[Black Mothers in Power Delaware](#)

[Children & Families First](#)

[Christiana Care](#)

[Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. \(CLASI\)](#)

[Delaware Affordable Housing Coalition](#)

[Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)

[Delaware Coalition Against Gun Violence](#)

[Delaware Continuum of Care](#)

[Delaware Division Public Health](#)

[Delaware Federation of Housing Counselors](#)

[Delaware National Organization for Women](#)

[Delaware Poor People's Campaign](#)

[Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative](#)

[Delaware State Human Relations Commission](#)

[Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, Inc. \(DVLS\)](#)



[Healthy Communities Delaware](#)

[HerStory Ensemble LLC](#)

[H.O.M.E.S Campaign Delaware](#)

[Housing Alliance Delaware](#)

[Jewish Family Services of Delaware](#)

[Lutheran Community Services](#)

[Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League](#)

[NeighborGood Partners](#)

[Network Delaware](#)

[Peace and Justice Group of Westminster Presbyterian Church](#)

[Southern Delaware Alliance for Social Justice](#)

[Unitarian Universalist Delaware Advocacy Network](#)

[United Way of Delaware](#)

[University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service](#)

[Women's March Sussex](#)

[YWCA Delaware](#)