

## MD Lawmakers Looking to Prohibit Evictions During the Holidays

Posted by [Zach Hill](#) On 01/09/2020

**ANNAPOLIS, Md.** — For the 441st time in state history, the Maryland General Assembly reconvened on Jan. 8, 2020 for a legislative session that many anticipate will be dominated with talks of funding public education. But that is not the only thing that the Democratic majority is hoping to get done over the next 90 days.

House Bill 20 (HB20), which was pre-filed into the state legislature by Del. Mark Chang [D-32] of Anne Arundel County, proposes a moratorium on evictions from Dec. 18 to Jan. 8 of the following year.



"It's a very emotional bill for me," Chang told TheBaynet.com. "I went and did a ride along in my district not too long ago, and I saw how hard it was for these families that were being put out of their homes... You see kids asking, 'Why are my toys going in the front yard,' and it breaks your heart."

Under the bill's main section, it specifies that a "judgement for possession or a warrant of restitution" cannot be executed by a landlord or county official during the proposed period of three weeks.

"The bill would serve as a hard pause for [three] weeks to give those going through tough times a little extra dignity," Chang explained. "The eviction process is a long and time consuming process, so what is an additional [three] weeks added onto that?"

Chang said he anticipates the proposal will go over well in the General Assembly, but some major groups are beginning to vocalize disapproval for the bill. Maryland Realtors, an organization which prides itself on protecting rights of property owners, decided on Jan. 6 that they openly oppose HB20.

"[Our committees] feel that it's more appropriate for the individual sheriffs or whoever is conducting these evictions to have their own policy in place," Maryland Realtor's Senior Vice President of Government Affairs Bill Castelli said. "There are some jurisdictions where just as matter of practice, they won't conduct evictions during that time so it probably won't have a significant impact in those areas... But in others, all of the cost of turnover that a landlord has when they're trying to go from one tenant to another is just their cost of doing business. Then it gets figured into whatever costs they charge [for] future rents."

Though Chang describes his colleagues comprising the General Assembly as "a group of compassionate people," Castelli is concerned that their compassion might turn into sensitivity on this issue.

"My guess is that [the General Assembly is] going to want to be sensitive to people going through struggles at difficult times," Castelli explained. "But to put it into the code for one holiday compared to another holiday... [They] picked a time frame which is typically associated with a big Christian holiday. You know, is the next bill going to be focusing on Passover, or perhaps Ramadan or another holiday..."

"Where do you stop?" Castelli inquired.

The bill, which has made it through it's first reading by the Environment and Transportation Committee on Jan. 8, will next be heard by the House on Jan. 28 at 1 p.m.

If adopted, the legislation would take effect on Oct. 1, 2020.

Contact Zach at [zach.hill@thebaynet.com](mailto:zach.hill@thebaynet.com).

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