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**Contact:**

Nicholle Granger

Communications Director | Maryland Legal Aid

(443) 915-8326 | ngranger@mdlaborg

## **Maryland Legal Aid Files Tenant Safety Act Complaint on Behalf of 18 Hanover Square Residents**

**Baltimore, MD** – Maryland Legal Aid has filed a Tenant Safety Act complaint on behalf of 18 residents at Hanover Square, a 199-unit apartment complex in Baltimore City where tenants continue to report serious and ongoing unsafe living conditions.

For over a year, tenants at Hanover Square have suffered through bed bug infestations, rodents, and broken elevators. Despite their complaints to the landlord, these unsafe and unhealthy conditions have persisted. These tenants have also raised their concerns to Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) through multiple channels, including repeated 311 calls. As a result, the property has been identified by the as a “priority dwelling,” a designation under the Strengthening Renters’ Safety Act that requires property owners to meet with DHCD about how they will remedy the health and safety conditions at their property and requires DHCD to inspect the priority property twice a year.

Despite this history and continuing complaints from tenants, the City recently granted a rental license for this property. This raises serious concerns about how laws protecting tenants are, or are not, being enforced.

**“This lawsuit became necessary because the landlord and DHCD did not act, signaling that low-income renters ought to be okay living with bugs and vermin,”** said Zafar Shah, Advocacy Director for Human Right to Housing, Maryland Legal Aid. **“Our clients have been reporting these problems for months. The lack of meaningful corrective action shows that DHCD inspections and enforcement are not working the way they should.”**

The complaint asks the court to require the landlord to take immediate meaningful, building-wide action to address the serious conditions and ensure that tenants have a safe and healthy place to live as the law requires.

**“We’ve been raising these issues for a long time, and it shouldn’t take media attention or legal action for things to start getting fixed,”** said Anthony Warfield, Vice President of the Hanover Square Resident Committee and a resident of 14 years. **“Now that the property has its rental license, there are still pests, apartments that need real repairs, and residents, especially older tenants, who need help and aren’t getting it. We just want safe, decent homes and for management to follow through.”**

**“The Tenant Safety Act was created to give residents a tool to address exactly these kinds of pervasive conditions,”** said Vicki Schultz, Executive Director of Maryland Legal Aid. **“Tenants are reporting issues; the property is on the City’s radar, and yet serious problems continue. Allowing tenants to come together helps to close the gap between what the law requires and what tenants are experiencing is deeply concerning.”**

For more information or to arrange interviews with Maryland Legal Aid attorneys or tenant representatives, please contact Nicholle Granger at [ngranger@mdlaborg](mailto:ngranger@mdlaborg)

## **About Maryland Legal Aid**

Established in 1911, Maryland Legal Aid is a statewide nonprofit 501(c)(3) law firm that advocates with and for Marylanders experiencing poverty to achieve equity and social justice through free civil legal services, community collaboration, and systemic change. From its 11 offices across the state and through its many community-based clinics, Maryland Legal Aid helps clients preserve and access safe and affordable housing; maintain custody of their children and be safe from domestic violence; and increase their economic security by defending against consumer debt, including foreclosures and tax sales, removing barriers to employment, and accessing critical income supports such as Medicaid, SNAP, unemployment, and other vital public benefits. In its advocacy, Maryland Legal Aid seeks to change systems that perpetuate poverty and inequity.