

City," subtitle "Landlord and Tenant," to follow immediately after Section 459A thereof, as enacted by Chapter 459 of the Acts of 1968, to read as follows:

459B.

(a) Findings and Purposes.

(1) It is found and declared that there exist in the City of Baltimore structures used for human habitation which are, or may become in the future, substandard with respect to structure, equipment, or maintenance; and that such conditions constitute a menace to the health, safety, welfare, and reasonable comfort of its citizens.

(2) It is further declared that the State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore have enacted laws and ordinances to enforce certain standards to assure that such conditions do not persist or develop.

(3) It is further declared that in order to assure that dwellings meet these minimum requirements as established in these laws and ordinances, tenants must have the free unencumbered right of complaint to their landlords, the courts, and governmental agencies.

(4) It is further declared that retaliation, without cause, by landlords through eviction, rental increases, or other action, and tenant's fear of such retaliation, have restricted the exercise of these rights.

(5) Therefore, it is declared that it is against public policy to allow landlords to engage in such retaliatory acts.

(b) Protection of the Tenant's Rights.

(1) No action or proceeding to recover possession of any leased premises shall be maintainable by the landlord against the tenant, nor shall an action of distress for rent be maintainable, nor shall the landlord cause the rent to be increased, nor may the services which by law are to be supplied by the landlord to or for the benefit of the tenant be decreased, if the action, rent increase, or reduction of services by the landlord is in retaliation for the request by the tenant to the landlord that violations of law with respect to the leased premises be corrected, the filing of a complaint with respect to the leased premises with any Federal, State, or Municipal agency, the issuance of any notices of violation against the premises, the exercise of rights under Section 459A of the Code of the Public Local Laws of Baltimore City (1949 Edition, as enacted by Chapter 459 of the Acts of 1968), or the exercise of any other legal right.

(2) If notice of eviction, increase in rent, or decrease in services was given within twelve months after the exercise by the tenant of any of the actions enumerated in subsection (b) hereof, there shall be a presumption that the landlord acted in retaliation.

(1) NO ACTION OR PROCEEDING TO RECOVER POSSESSION OF ANY LEASED PREMISES SHALL BE MAINTAINABLE BY THE LANDLORD AGAINST THE TENANT, NOR SHALL AN ACTION OF DISTRESS FOR RENT BE MAINTAINABLE, NOR SHALL THE LANDLORD CAUSE THE RENT TO BE INCREASED, NOR MAY THE SERVICES WHICH BY LAW ARE TO BE SUPPLIED BY THE LANDLORD TO OR FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE TENANT BE DECREASED, IF THE ACTION, RENT INCREASE OR REDUCTION OF SERVICES BY