

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2026, Legislative Day No. 2

Resolution No. 5-26

Councilmembers Jones, Young, Kach, Marks & Ertel

By the County Council, January 20, 2026

A RESOLUTION of the Baltimore County Council encouraging the Maryland General Assembly to take legislative action to address the continuing crisis of squatting throughout Maryland.

WHEREAS, in general, a “squatter” is a person living in a house or apartment who illegally or fraudulently claims to have a right to reside there; and

WHEREAS, recent cases of illegal squatting have been well documented in news articles, including a June 3, 2025 article from Fox-45 News that detailed how squatters illegally took over a Windsor Mill house in Baltimore County while the property owner was attempting to sell it, going so far as to change the locks and forging rent payment receipts; and

WHEREAS, other news articles have detailed how groups of squatters have coordinated their illegal activity through social media and even advertised vacant houses as squatters houses without the knowledge or permission of the property owners; and

WHEREAS, more recently in an article from December 18, 2025, The Sun’s Spotlight on Maryland documented how a \$2.3 million home in Bethesda, one of Maryland’s wealthiest neighborhoods, had been illegally occupied by squatters on the foreclosed property since July, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the squatters, who were found to have criminal backgrounds that included

multiple vehicle theft charges, were finally arrested on December 8, after multiple complaints from several neighbors and the filing of criminal charges; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly in 2024 passed S.B. 46, which sped up the timetable for dealing with squatters, requiring the District Court to hear a wrongful detainer complaint within 10 days; and

WHEREAS, this action was movement in the right direction, but it is evident more needs to be done at the State level to address the continuing crisis of squatting in Maryland; and

WHEREAS, in the last few years, General Assembly members have proposed solutions, such as clarifying the difference between a lawful tenant and a person illegally moving into a property; strengthening criminal laws to prohibit a person from claiming to own or sell a property they don't actually own; or cracking down on social media squatter groups by setting up a property title in the Blockchain; and

WHEREAS, other possible solutions include establishing a clear delineation with understandable criteria between a civil dispute involving a lawful tenant and a violation of criminal laws involving individuals committing acts such as trespass, breaking and entering, or burglary in order to illegally possess a residence, which can and should be enforced by law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, the examples referenced herein clearly demonstrate that this is a nonpartisan issue affecting the State and victimizing property owners regardless of socioeconomic levels; and

WHEREAS, other States, such as Florida and Georgia, have successfully tackled this issue by permitting evictions of squatters without a court order if the property owner signs an affidavit attesting to their ownership and that they never gave the squatter lawful permission to possess the property; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly should explore these and other possible solutions; now

therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Baltimore County Council encourages the Maryland General Assembly to take legislative action to address the continuing crisis of squatting in Maryland; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Governor of Maryland; the Baltimore County delegation to the Maryland General Assembly; and the Baltimore County Executive; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall take effect from the date of its passage by the County Council.



LEGISLATION DETAIL

LEGISLATION _____

DISPOSITION _____

ENACTED _____

EFFECTIVE _____

AMENDMENTS _____

ROLL CALL - BILL

MOTION

AYE NAY

SECOND

Councilman Young

Councilman Patoka

Councilman Kach

Councilman Jones

Councilman Marks

Councilman Ertel

Councilman Crandell

ROLL CALL - AMENDMENTS

MOTION

AYE NAY

Councilman Young

Councilman Patoka

Councilman Kach

Councilman Jones

Councilman Marks

Councilman Ertel

Councilman Crandell

ROLL CALL - AMENDMENTS

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Councilman Crandell