



**Chair Warren and Members of the Committee:**

We appreciate this opportunity to submit written proponent testimony for HB 2378, which outlines procedures for removing squatters from properties, requiring notarized affidavits, and introduces penalties for false claims, while providing legal recourse for wrongful removals and excluding squatter occupancy from eviction processes under the residential landlord-tenant act. We hold the following position on HB 2378:

1. HB 2378 Protects Property Owners' Rights and Prevents Financial Loss
2. HB 2378 Enhances Community Safety and Quality of Life
3. HB 2378 Establishes a Clear and Efficient Legal Framework

**HB 2378 Protects Property Owners' Rights and Prevents Financial Loss**

Squatting infringes upon the fundamental rights of property owners, often leading to significant financial burdens, including property damage, legal expenses and loss of rental income. Insurance experts highlight that squatters can lead to substantial financial losses for property owners, encompassing legal costs, lost rental income, and property damage.<sup>1</sup>

By streamlining the removal process, HB 2378 minimizes these economic burdens, preserving property values and financial stability for owners.

**HB 2378 Enhances Community Safety and Quality of Life**

Properties occupied by squatters can become hotspots for criminal activities, adversely affecting neighborhood safety and residents' quality of life. For instance, in South Williamsburg, Brooklyn, squatters occupied a \$4 million brownstone, causing distress to the community and financial strain on the owner.<sup>2</sup> Enabling prompt removal of squatters through HB 2378 will deter such illicit activities, fostering safer communities.

**HB 2378 Establishes a Clear and Efficient Legal Framework**

Currently, property owners face complex and prolonged legal challenges when addressing squatting incidents. This bill introduces a clear procedure, allowing owners to submit a notarized affidavit to law enforcement, expediting the removal process. Similar legislative measures have proven effective

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<sup>1</sup> Clair Wilkinson, Business Insurance, *Squatting poses significant risks for property owners*, February 25, 2025, <https://www.businessinsurance.com/squatting-poses-significant-risks-for-property-owners/>

<sup>2</sup> NY Post Editorial Board, *Another NYC squatting outrage: When will the City Council treat this plague as the menace it is?*, October 6, 2024, <https://nypost.com/2024/10/06/opinion/another-nyc-squatting-outrage-when-will-the-city-council-treat-this-plague-as-the-menace-it-is/>

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elsewhere; for example, Alabama enacted laws enabling swift eviction of squatters, resulting in enhanced property rights protection.<sup>3</sup>

HB 2378 establishes an efficient legal framework that balances the rights of property owners with due process, ensuring timely resolution of squatting issues.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to pass HB 2378.

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<sup>3</sup> Office of the Governor of Alabama, *Governor Ivey Signs House Bill 182, Combatting Illegal Squatting*, May 6, 2024, <https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2024/05/governor-ivey-signs-house-bill-182-combatting-illegal-squatting/>