

Submitter: Leslie Clark

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB799

The housing crisis and the economic crisis currently occurring are society's responsibility as a whole to deal with and should be shouldered equally by society. The restrictions that came into play "temporarily" during the pandemic placed the burden on the landlords which is a small segment of society. This is unfair to the landlords!

Many landlords invested in real estate instead of in the other investments such as bonds and securities. The income from the real estate was planned to supplement current income needs of the landlord, and/or to grow much like securities invested in the stock market would grow. Forcing landlords to shoulder the burden of slow payment of rent, late payment of rent, and/or non-payment of rent unfairly harms the landlords.

Passing this bill would cause further harm, and does not address the underlying issues ensuring low-income residents have the assistance that they need. The bill, as it is currently written, would allow renters who have failed to pay rent on time – for any reason – the legal right to stay in the unit for at least 60 days while an application for rent assistance moves through the review process. A couple of points here: 1) 60 days really means 90 or more days because - if you can issue an eviction notice on day 60, it will still take 30 or more days to remove an unwilling tenant, and 2) during the 60 plus days, the landlord still has to pay the mortgage, property taxes, utilities, insurance, repairs, etc. which might mean the landlord doesn't have the cash flow needed to pay the bills of the property, or their own expenses, so then has to go without or to borrow money.

I personally had tenants apply for assistance during the pandemic. I received notices stating assistance was applied for, and under the pandemic rules, I had to just wait as there was no one answering the phones or emails to inquiries as to if or when to expect payment, or even if the tenant had qualified or would qualify for assistance. In one case, it was 8 months before I received payment of rent for January through June rent which means I had to come up with the "missing" money (a little over \$8,000) myself to pay the bills of the property.

Our priorities as a whole should be increasing rental assistance and expanding our stock of rental housing supply. If there are assistance programs in place, then need to be temporary and timely. Timely assistance should occur early in the month to enable the landlord to fulfill their obligations.