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Comment:

To the Clerk of the Michigan Supreme Court:

I am submitting these comments on behalf of the Washtenaw Housing Alliance.

The Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA) supports the changes to MCR 4.201, the eviction case court rule, that the Michigan Supreme Court has proposed. Please adopt these changes.

The WHA is a coalition of 25+ non-profit and government partners working to end homelessness in Washtenaw County, MI. While during the COVID pandemic the federal eviction moratorium and temporary rental assistance and legal representation provided through programs like the Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) and COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) offered a reprieve from evictions in our community, we have recently seen eviction court cases rise over the past couple months and are concerned we are trending backwards in supporting tenants through the eviction process.

We often hear from our member agencies, and experience it ourselves, that tenants do not understand their rights in eviction court cases. It is confusing and terrifying for people experiencing a possible eviction. The proposed changes will not significantly change the eviction court case process, but they would likely give tenants genuine due process in housing cases. Eviction cases will still move quickly, especially as compared to other court cases, but the proposed changes would ensure they are handled more consistently and fairly. Eviction cases and, more so, actual evictions cause tremendous harm at several levels not only to the evicted individuals and families, but also the communities in which they live. The proposed court rule changes may help to avert or at least diminish some of the harm.

Thank you again for proposing these changes.

Warmly,

Amanda Carlisle

Executive Director, Washtenaw Housing Alliance