

Name: Natalie Punzak

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Comment:

I am a law student at the University of Michigan Law School, writing to express my support for the proposed amendments to MCR 4.201, the eviction case court rule that the Supreme Court has proposed. Throughout my time in law school, I've volunteered weekly in Washtenaw County Eviction Court. I've seen the stress, trauma, and harm that eviction imparts on our neighbors, and I've also seen the court adapt to the improved processes that temporary pandemic-related measures provided for tenants and landlords.

The proposed changes won't significantly change the eviction case process, but they will help tenants by giving them a little more time to avoid a possession judgment and possible eviction. In nonpayment of rent cases, they would help tenants and landlords by providing more time for landlords to get the rent they are lawfully due. This is a small step toward increased protection for tenants that balances landlords' interests. With these changes and within its authority, the Court is properly giving some consideration to the harsh reality of today's rental housing market--one of rising rents and a dearth of decent, affordable rental housing, especially for lower-income families. And continuing the use of remote technology and pre-trials in eviction proceedings makes the process more accessible for all.

Disregard the landlord industry's harmful comments, adopt the proposed changes, and do everything in your power to protect the rights and lives of tenants.

Sincerely,

Natalie Punzak  
University of Michigan Law School