

Name: Dan O'Neill

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Comment:

I write to express opposition to the proposed amendments. The COVID pandemic, as an extreme and unpredicted emergency, required particular and extraordinary efforts to minimize transmission of the virus in the context of widespread shutdowns, employment loss and resultant loss of incomes for renters. This was understandable and prudent. However, now is the time to return to normal order and normal rule of law. The landlord-tenant process as it exists today is fair to both sides. It strikes an appropriate balance between the importance of housing for renters and the importance of property rights for property owners. Michigan law provides for sufficient and balanced opportunity to resolve disputes between tenants and landlords and the proposed amendments skew the process at the expense of property owners and their rights. Delays in removing a tenant for non-payment of rent simply amount to an added expense for an investment property. This is an expense which will be passed on in the form of higher rents for everyone. Further, a landlord will be forced to exercise much more discretion in who they rent to. If a landlord knows the time and expense to remove a non-paying tenant has increased, then the threshold for risk with regard to evaluating a prospective tenant must also shift. This means those individuals whose credit scores and financial history indicate past difficulty will be much less likely to find a place to live. From a landlord's perspective, why take the risk if the process to remove for non-payment has been extended and skewed toward the tenant. In that case it would be better to leave the rental vacant until a lower-risk renter can be found.