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Comment:

I support the changes to MCR 4.201, the eviction case court rule that the Supreme Court has proposed, and encourage you to adopt them. I will never forget the rapid decline of my friend Rissa Haynes, who suffered from a baffling disabling disease, following her eviction from a senior residence that should have protected her. Instead, they had tenants deposit rent in a slot, then claimed the rent was missing or late. Unsurprisingly, this place reverted to a market rate apartment a few years later, about a year after my friend died, unable to fight both the disease and housing instability. The court proceeding happened faster than she could arrange a lawyer, personal care and transportation, and the ensuing eviction was so rapid that we had time to take only 1 carload of her personal belongings before the sheriff was at the door and her belongings were heaped on the curb like trash. The subtext was that she, too, was trash. This hardworking, educated mother, reduced to trash by a rare disease and a punitive system.

The proposed changes don't go far enough, but they give tenants more time and information in a housing crisis that threatens to upend many more lives. Remote technology would have allowed Rissa to contest her eviction and a pre-trials would have given her time to mount a defense and make some preparations. I support MCR 4.201 (B)(3)(c) because landlords should be required to follow the law if they want to leverage the court to evict tenants. Rissa and other low-income renters I know frequently miss important appointments because their landlord abruptly schedules an "inspection" of their apartment. They know they cannot trust the landlord to evaluate fairly in their absence, especially in a hot real estate market. The same landlord who won't address mold in the ceiling or a broken lock on an entry door, evicts a tenant for having a few boxes in a corner (a fire hazard).

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