

Name: George Roberts

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Comment:

Honorable Justices of the Supreme Court,

Please accept these comments in opposition to the proposed amendments.

As a landlord, I foresee many unintended consequences from these proposed changes. I take much pride in providing safe, clean, dignified housing to my valued residents. Decent rental housing is provided by landlords who are willing to make capital expenditures, and such expenditures will be made only if the financial risk they have taken on is backed up by reasonable legal protections. I go to great lengths to improve the safety of my properties from the standpoint of bringing older buildings up to code, ensuring proper lighting and security cameras and letting my valued residents know that people who violate the law or otherwise threaten the safety and security of our community are not welcome on the premises. Conscientious landlords like myself have the option to acquire properties in jurisdictions that balance the rights of both landlords and tenants. The long-term impact of making it difficult for landlords to evict tenants is that conscientious landlords will be driven to states with more enlightened policies and tenants will be left to deal with slumlords who do not make needed repairs or improvements and who care far less about legal compliance in the first place. I do speak from experience here. My partners and I have invested over one million dollars improving the housing stock in a county that is now considering rent control measures which are expected to be passed this November. I do not plan to make any further investments in that county. Why would I invest in a jurisdiction that does not respect the investments I have made in safe, clean, dignified housing when there are other jurisdictions that more reasonably balance the rights of both landlords and tenants?

Specifically, I find it detrimental that tenants who claim that they have applied for assistance are automatically given a 30 day stay and that furthermore, no documentation of said application is required to obtain the stay. Generally, one of the requirements of rental assistance programs is that the tenant be behind on rent. I have seen strategic non-payment of rents follow the enactment of these programs, a fact that the tenants often sheepishly admit. Neither I, nor my investors who in many cases are retirees on fixed income need to have their lives disrupted by people who are taking advantage of the system through unnecessary delays.

I would like to acknowledge that the price of rent and housing prices have increased dramatically during the pandemic timeframe. However, many of the reasons behind these price increases are directly or indirectly the result of government action taken regarding the pandemic. Making these changes permanent would exacerbate the housing shortage by disincentivizing investment. If it becomes difficult to evict tenants in a timely fashion, you should expect an increase in foreclosures to be the result when economic conditions worsen. I don't want to see the financial system destabilized again by poor housing policy

I have and will continue to work with tenants who in good faith are temporarily unable to pay their rent. I should not be forced to extend private resources to people who use the legal system unscrupulously to delay the inevitable or who have no intention of paying rent.

Respectfully,
George Roberts
Horizon Multifamily