

Name: Nathan Chesterman

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Comment:

I have been a renter in Michigan for nearly 10 years and I strongly support the proposed changes to MCR 4.201.

Eviction is a violent process that devastates communities, destabilizes families, and disproportionately impacts black women and children. Eviction perpetuates cycles of instability and poverty. The current court rules allow for landlords to evict tenants far too quickly, often before tenants are able to obtain legal council or explore alternative ways to stay in their home (i.e. rental assistance). Additionally, for many working class people, having to take the time to get to and from court during a work day for an eviction case is not possible, so people are often unable to defend themselves.

I support the changes to MCR 4.201 (B)(3)(c) because they are an important step towards offering protections to tenants that we sorely need in our society. Turning the first eviction proceeding into a pre-trial will allow tenants to obtain legal council. Halting eviction proceedings for families that have applied for rental assistance ensures that people who need financial help are more likely to stay in their home. Enabling remote trials improves the chance that a renter will be able to attend their eviction proceeding and defend themselves.

We need these changes urgently because we need our legal system to serve the needs of the public, not the investment interests of landlords. I urge you to make these changes and continue fighting to improve the lives and rights of tenants.

Sincerely,

Nathan Chesterman

Member of Ann Arbor Rising for Tenants / GEO Housing Caucus