

Submitter: James Schaff

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB799

The pandemic era restrictions created an extreme hardship on landlords and housing providers, even with the amount of assistance available. My company manages over 2500 units of housing. While certainly the exception, we had numerous tenants abuse the system, steal assistance funds from the program, simply refuse to pay rent or make no real efforts to get assistance and ultimately default on thousands of dollars worth of rent even when assistance was readily available. Ultimately the cost of those people was borne by the housing provider.

The proposed bill again transfers a societal problem to housing providers. We work with tenants to get assistance and are in the business of collecting rents, which then pays taxes, debt service and maintenance. For the state to permit tenants to not pay rent for 60 days and force that cost on housing providers, will ultimately reduce the supply of rental housing.

I will also tell you that rarely is non payment the only issue with tenants that ultimately default. There are often property damage, drug addiction, mental health issues and many other factors that contribute to non payment.

In addition, it should be noted that eviction can be a weeks to months long process. There are ample safeguards and opportunities for assistance agencies to intervene along the way.

I support assistance programs and we work with multiple agencies to house people regularly. Many of the programs are well run and our focus should be on leveraging those resources more quickly not transferring costs to housing providers.