

Submitter: Maria Sworske

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB799

Coming from the position of being a housing provider, I know first hand that continuing to tighten restrictions is having the effect of causing many of us “mom ’n pops” to leave the business. As a Realtor, I am making my living by helping rental property owners to sell their residential rental property. The last 2 years have been my best ever (thank you, restrictions). I even sold 4 of my own rental housing units at the end of 2019 because I could no longer provide housing with most of our tools taken away. Not to mention the Covid “protections” that made it possible for some tenants to get away with not paying rent (even though they could have). We don’t need more of these restrictions. The rental housing that’s being sold? - I can tell you first hand that much of it is not being kept as rental housing. The inventory of available rentals continues to decline directly as the result of increasingly difficult regulations, financial penalties & legal fees, rental income loss, etc. We need to reverse this, not continue it.

Contrary to what the public is being told, we housing providers are not “eviction happy”. It’s very costly and time intensive, not to mention emotionally draining to cause a tenant to move out. We hold out until eviction is the last possible option, after offering all other options and bending over backwards to help a tenant stay housed, while sacrificing our own financial security. Failure to pay rent is not the only reason we may need a tenant to leave. Yet current & proposed regulations allow the problem tenants to hide behind this excuse.

Our primary concern with the bill, as it is currently written, is that it would allow renters who have failed to pay rent on time - for any reason – the legal right to stay in the unit for at least 60 days while an application for rent assistance moves through the review process. A housing provider who has gotten to this point has already lost enough by trying to help the tenant and letting the process drag out. Next step is to call a Realtor, as the exasperated housing provider reaches a point where they simply cannot take it any more. I’m seeing it all the time (and helping them get out).

We are in a good economy now, with plentiful jobs and increased wages. It’s time to encourage renters to get back to personal responsibility as a way to maintain their own housing. It’s time to stop enabling and encouraging dependency. We must stop removing consequences for irresponsible behavior. The housing providers cannot indefinitely carry the burden.

The bottom line is that this bill will encourage the trend to continue, of the small-time housing providers leaving the business. This decreases available rental housing and

increases rents.

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