

Jill Cataldi

From: Shane Cooper <scooperre@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 12:12 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: AGAINST H6464

To the House Judiciary Committee,

In regards to House bill H6464 – Sealing of Eviction Files, I am writing to state my strong objection to this proposal. Well, the architects of this bill were undoubtedly well-intentioned the effects of it will ultimately harm landlords, banks, the real estate market, and most importantly the very people it is aimed to protect, tenants.

As to the impact on landlords, the vast majority of those out there are small property owners who have worked diligently often at great sacrifice for their families and themselves to acquire and own a rental property. They view their tenants as their responsibility and want nothing more than to provide them a safe, clean, comfortable place to live and be compensated a fair rental rate in consideration for all they are delivering. There are innumerable factors that contribute to providing this environment but accurate and complete information regarding tenants living in their properties is critical. If a landlord were to unwittingly place a tenant who had a previous eviction record and was unable to see this file they could very well be putting their families livelihood at risk, the tenancy of the other tenants in the building, and potentially the neighborhood at large if the situation were to deteriorate unabated.

As to the tenants themselves, the ones who have an eviction, there is the lesson of accountability. We teach it to our children because it is an important lifelong lesson that will pay dividends throughout all aspects of their careers and their personal lives. Actions have consequences and people need to understand this.

If a tenant was evicted, having exhausted the enormous amount of federal, state, city, and non-profit help that exists and gone through the thorough, lengthy, and deliberate court process and still ended up being evicted it was not by accident. This is not a verdict that is arrived at easily, quickly, or recklessly, the process prevents this. And if they were rightfully evicted there are consequences to this and the person needs to be held to account. This is not to say they are forever stained, never to rent an apartment or house again but it certainly does motivate them to improve, to better themselves to move past the incident and not repeat the mistakes that led to this situation. A perfect example is your credit rating. When someone makes decisions that lead to a bad credit rating, we do not forever damn them, but they have a chance to rebuild. However, the motivation to do so is largely driven by the fact this information is public to financial institutions that use it to make lending decisions. Without this information how would borrowing happen? Without access to tenant records, how will landlords confidently rent to new tenants?

Ultimately this proposal undermines the process of renting properties to good tenants and holding those responsible who have made bad decisions. A landlord can still of course rent to a person with an eviction, it happens all the time. However, they can do so with full knowledge of what the individual was evicted for and make an informed decision. We do not want landlords to have their livelihoods and their properties put in jeopardy, or other tenant's rights put in peril because the information was not available to prevent a bad situation from developing.

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