



Helping People. Changing Lives.

February 1, 2016

To: Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Human Services and Housing Committee

Submitted Via E-Mail

In regards to: HB4001

I am the Director of Housing and Energy Services for Community Services Consortium (CSC). CSC is the community action agency serving Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties. The clients in our rural communities are trying hard to maintain a roof over their heads, but increasingly find themselves priced out of the local housing market and/or displaced on very short notice. **The following information may help you understand the current housing situation in rural communities and the impact this bill could have.**

- Each year, our housing assistance programs serve nearly 1,000 people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- More and more frequently, the families we serve report being displaced by unaffordable rent increases or by landlords who are converting rentals to vacation homes (such as those offered on AirBnB).
- Households that receive a 30-day notice to vacate seldom have access to the large sums of money needed for first and last months' rent, deposits, and moving fees.
- CSC does not have sufficient resources to meet the demand for financial assistance.
- Benton and Lincoln counties currently have less than a 1% vacancy rate, which means even when we provide financial assistance to help our clients relocate there are no available housing units.
- An unplanned move, with only 30 days notice, creates a cascading series of crises in our clients' lives and can destabilize the lives of everyone in the household.
- People living in our rural communities do not have access to the same volume and array of employment, transportation, and daycare options available to urban dwellers.
- For rural households, relocation can mean loss of transportation arrangements, a change in schools/daycare, and the loss of a job.

Any relief that can be provided to renters to allow even a fraction more time to prepare for a change in their housing circumstances is desperately needed to keep our clients stably housed! The changes proposed in HB4001 would provide some much needed assistance in this regard. **For children to succeed in school and families to remain dependable and productive employees it is essential for them to have a modicum of stability in their housing.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. McGuire', is written over a white background.

Pegge McGuire
Director of Housing and Energy Services