

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice Chairs Stark and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Norton. I live and work in Lincoln County. As the Executive Director of My Sisters' Place (the only community-based agency responsible for addressing domestic/sexual violence in Lincoln County), I see the importance of housing stability on survivors of interpersonal violence every day. For example, we had at least 3 survivors in the last year who had a check in their hands for move in expenses, but were unable to find a suitable place to live due to high rent.

According to various studies, at least 30% of all homelessness for women is a direct result of domestic violence. This means that housing stability is a major factor in the ability for survivors to escape their abuser. Often, clients return to their abuser, and their abusive situation, when they are unable to find a safe stable home. In Lincoln County, we have had 6 clients return to their abuser, rather than experience homelessness. These are just the individuals who come to us for services, or who have even left in the first place. We have no way of knowing how many more do not leave, or access our services who face these same dilemmas.

Finally, no cause evictions have a devastating impact on those experiencing domestic/sexual violence. Locally, we see at least one client per month who experiences eviction as a result of domestic violence perpetrated upon them. For example, a client received a 3-day eviction notice for "law enforcement involvement" after her abuser kicked in her door. Our agency intervened, and the landlords withdrew that notice. However, they issued a 30-day no cause eviction because the landlord told the victim that they didn't want the her ex-partner coming back again. This resulted in the removal of her children, and she is now homeless and on the streets.

As you are aware, HB 2004, creates a just-cause eviction standard, repeals the prohibition on rent stabilization policies, and would alleviate some of the disproportionate burden on domestic/sexual violence victims. Those seeking safety have enough to worry about without the added burden of facing homelessness.

Elizabeth "Lisa" Norton, MSW
Executive Director
My Sisters' Place
(541) 574-9424
www.mysistersplace.us



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