

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to let you know I am opposed to the proposal of forgiving tenants 20% off their rent as a carte blanche rule. Many of us who are not in the business of being landlords, and are trying to make ends meet in terrible times, cannot afford this measure. Currently, I rent rooms in my house, and all of my renters make more money than I do. I am in a terrible position, due to the fact that two tenants have shorted me on rent simply because they can. They have also caused extensive damage to the house, but because I rent out rooms they can easily say, "I didn't do that." To top it off, I am a travelling teacher who cannot always be home, which has rarely been an issue. But with the current occupants it is. Also to clarify, I am teaching online with only 25% of my previous income. I have also chosen to be near my 84 and 89 year old parents, so while I am not tied to where I am because of a job, I am tied to it because of the responsibility I feel to be near aging parents for at least part of the year.

I understand the dilemma of helping tenants who are in need, and I have long been a housing advocate. Anyone who personally knows me, would vouch that I truly care about anyone in need. One of my classes even built an 8 x12 structure for a non-profit in Santa Cruz that provides housing for youth in need. In keeping with this belief, I have rented my rooms in the low range between \$400 - \$600 in the Friendly St. neighborhood. And, when a tenant doesn't have rent, they know I will be kind about a later payment. I have even traded chores for rent. Many tenants have expressed gratitude for living in my house.

What I would like to emphasize is that there is a huge difference between a tenant who needs some extra support and those who have become House Pirates. I know I am not the only landlord who is suffering from this phenomena, but I would like to share the details of my case to give an understanding of how destructive it can become.

I am sorry for the length, but please stay with me, because it has been a nightmare. So...

I have a four bedroom house, with an attic that has also been used as a bedroom. The attic has never been a rental, but the bedrooms have variously been rented, even the master bedroom.

I became unemployed in the middle of July, but was not eligible for unemployment benefits due to the fact that right before Covid hit, I had given notice I would not be returning the following school year. My intention of opening an in home kindergarten was also thwarted by Covid. So, it became necessary to rent all four bedrooms and keep the attic room for myself. We all knew a tenant would be moving out in November and I would be advertising for a new tenant in the master bedroom. Through the network of my closest friends, I found a delightful young woman, but she decided not to take the room. Tenant M asked to change to the nicer bedroom and I approved it. What I did not learn until later was that Tenants M and L discouraged the applicant from taking the room by what was described by the applicant as "trash-talking" me. Then I learned that tenant L had taken over two bedrooms in my absence, making it impossible to rent the open room.

Two other factors have complicated the situation.

1) Rodents: Eugene has a rodent problem, and by extension we found rats at my house. I immediately hired a pest control company who not only sets and checks traps, but they actually do construction to block any possible entrances. The service lasts a year and they return periodically to check traps. They also schedule you in if any rodents have been observed. I also hired lawn maintenance to remove any brush, blackberries, etc., especially anything near the house. I took other measures, as well, spending over \$2000. total. So, when the tenants called and said they had seen a rat, I was (of course) discouraged and called the pest control company immediately. Again, I did not learn until later that it was not a live rat, but was dead, and possibly from prior to the extensive work of the company.

2) Water Leak: I received a text from the tenants there was a leak coming from the upstairs down through the kitchen ceiling. We have had a leak in the same spot before (master bath) when a tenant didn't use the wrap around shower curtain and let the shower flow onto the floor (and hence down through

the kitchen ceiling). I called the tenant in that room to ask if that might be the problem, but it took a full week for him to return my call. I had to cancel a plumber coming over, because I could not make the arrangements with the tenant. When I found a handyman to go over to see if he could find the leak, he found a leaking bidet in the master bath and a huge puddle of water behind the toilet. I did not approve the bidet, and apparently it had been installed incorrectly. I had no idea to even look for this as a source for a leak, but how can they not have told me it had been installed or had a clue it was the leak. The damage and repairs were costly! Tenant L and Tenant M are best friends and claim to have hired a plumber, but will not tell me who that is.

Now for the fun part:

When I informed the tenant of the cause of the leak, it started a barrage of abusive texts, specifically that I hired someone that would claim it was the tenants' fault. I have had horrid things written to me with foul language and emojis, as well as belittling statements. When I called to explain the plumbing issue, Tenant L would not even let me speak, so I had to hang up. Then she wrote me a threatening email stating, "We aren't through!"

Then she reported me to the city. Why? In my opinion, some sort of retaliation? Some attempt to not pay rent? Her reasoning was I wasn't taking care of the rats or the leak, but the call to the city happened AFTER the leak (which they had caused!) was repaired and AFTER the pest control people had been back to the house. I had to accumulate so much information to send to the city proving what I had done before they were even called.

Tenant M has now moved out, owing rent. I have been informed the unauthorized and malfunctioning bidet gives me the right to charge him for damages, but I have no idea where he is. Tenant L has not paid rent for 2 months, claiming I haven't responded to their demands (which I did!). She has made it impossible to rent either of my now vacant rooms, and she has taken over a room not rented to her. That is \$1000./mth. from unrented rooms Tenant L not paying rent is \$400/mth. She has only paid \$100 for two months rent. I am now short \$1400/mth. That is my mortgage and home equity right there.

All three tenants have made it difficult to schedule any repairs (again, that they caused), and have threatened me with legalities. I must give 24 hours notice, but they don't have to be there or let anyone in. This happened last week, after the tenants themselves informed me I have 10 days to do repairs. How is that suppose to work?

I now cannot pay my mortgage or home equity loan. I have concerns they will not pay their bills (which are in my name) and I am personally a mess. I have worked as a single parent for years to keep my house, and now I could potentially lose it. With the chaos of what is happening there, I have been advised to come back to Oregon earlier than planned. This affects my ability to add more work hours to my schedule. The cost of coming back early is insane, financially and emotionally. I have informed my tenants I will be returning in January and will be occupying the now empty master bedroom. Again, a barrage of nasty emails and threats of legal issues. Admittedly, the last thing I want to do is drive across country in January, and I don't even have the gas money.

So, I hope you can see why the idea of the landlord giving tenants a 20% break on rent was like a punch to the gut. I'm sure it goes without saying that, because of my experience, I am also opposed to the extended ban on evictions. I want desperately for those people who need help to get it, but my situation is an example of how landlords are also being hurt. People are unethically taking advantage of what is already a difficult time for many.

Thank you,

Charlotte (Lolly) Rogers  
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