

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to oppose SB 282-1. As a small residential property manager, most of my clients are local "mom and pop" landlords. The eviction moratorium has severely impacted many of my clients who do not have the reserves to continue to support tenants who are not paying rent. No one argues that tenants need a safe place to stay during the pandemic. However, purely shouldering this on the backs of landlords is not the way to solve the issue. Landlords are still required to pay taxes, utilities, insurance, and maintenance on the property, the costs of which continue to increase. This is forcing small time landlords to sell, which inevitably takes the more affordable rental housing off the market to renters.

We have one example where a tenant did not pay the entire moratorium period and the owner was forced to sell the house after 9 months of no income to supplement the costs of owning the home. It was her only rental property and the rent was below market rent. A developer bought the house and will be tearing it down to rebuild something larger and more expensive. That is one of many examples from this past year.

In addition, forcing landlords to accept applicants who have not paid rent during the pandemic is too high of a liability, particularly without the State offering 100% rent relief or tax credits should those same applicants move in and continue to not pay rent without recourse.

The State seems overly concerned about fraud by Landlords and with adding fines to Landlords, but what about tenant responsibility and accountability? There are certainly tenants who genuinely need help and they should receive it, but there is also a percentage of tenants taking advantage. That percentage should be held to the same level of accountability that all Landlords are being held to.

SB 282-1 is not the way to resolve this issue. I am in opposition and believe there are better ways to support both tenants and landlords during the pandemic and after.

Sincerely,
Kristin