

REQUIRE LANDLORDS TO HAVE A LEGITIMATE BUSINESS REASON TO EVICT (House Bill 1236/Macri)

The current problem:

Outside of a handful of local jurisdictions, landlords in Washington can evict a tenant with just 20-days' notice, even if they have never violated the terms of their lease and never paid rent late. Landlords are not required to provide any reason for these "no cause" terminations.

Washington's eviction moratorium has prevented harmful no cause terminations, but when it expires renters will once again be at risk of being forced out of their homes. Landlords can circumvent all tenant protections, including eviction protections, by simply giving a 20-day no cause notice.

Legislative solution:

The Legislature should protect tenants by requiring landlords to have a legitimate business reason to terminate a tenancy. Without this policy change, rental assistance and other tenant protections will have limited effectiveness in keeping people housed, because a landlord can simply make someone move for no reason.

Why it matters:

This is not an eviction moratorium. Landlords can still evict tenants for reasons including nonpayment of rent, lease violations, or if the landlord intends to sell, move into the home, or move an immediate family member into the home.

Imagine paying your rent every month, following the lease agreements, and then learning that you have just 20 days to pack up your home and find a new place to live. This is difficult for anyone, especially people with low incomes. 60% of Americans cannot cover a \$1,000 emergency expense. For most people, moving to a new home requires planning and saving.

This issue affects all renters, but particularly communities of color since 69% of Black households, 66% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households, and 57% of Hispanic/Latinx households are renters in Washington, compared to just 33% of white households. Black people, particularly Black women, experience the highest eviction rates.

When landlords are not required to provide any reason for making someone move, discrimination and retaliation to go unchecked and it undermines Fair Housing protections.

Oftentimes people who receive "no cause" 20-day notices receive them after asserting their rights such as requesting a repair or challenging an illegal act by the landlord.