



KENDRA L. JOHNSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
5th District

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF DELAWARE
411 LEGISLATIVE AVENUE
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901**

COMMITTEES
Housing & Community Affairs, Chair
Health & Human Development
Legislative Oversight & Sunset
Sunset
Technology & Telecommunications

House Housing & Community Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

03.23.22

This committee meeting has been recorded and may be accessed via legis.delaware.gov

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Members included Vice Chair Bolden and Reps. Cooke, Freel, Hensley, Lambert, Moore, Ramone, Spiegelman, and Williams. Rep. Minor-Brown was also present. For a list of those present, please see the speaker list below.

With permission from the Chair, Rep. Bolden gave testimony before the introduction of SS 1 for SB 101.

Rep. Bolden expressed disappointment in the process that the bill was handled. She recalled discussion from the June 15th, 2021, House Housing & Community Affairs committee meeting in which SS 1 for SB 101 bill was discussed. SS1 for SB 101 was previously amended in accordance with Delaware Landlord Association feedback. Sen. Townsend and Rep. Minor-Brown stated their openness to continued conversation with landlords as the legislation progressed. The eviction crisis was discussed as many of the representatives voiced their concerns on the matter. Specifically, Rep. Williams stated the need for more work to be done on the bill. The bill was eventually tabled with Rep. Hensley's motion.

Rep. Bolden stated that after the bill was tabled there were supposed to be conversations with the landlord association before the bill was brought back for consideration. Rep. Bolden was not notified of these meetings. Rep. Bolden explained that she took no position during the previous meeting however supporters of the bill admonished her and her role in the bills tabling. She provided the committee flyers that were sent out in her district showcasing this rhetoric. Rep. Bolden stated that these flyers were disingenuous and discriminatory. She reiterated her disapproval of how the bill was handled and stated that she would not be voting to lift the bill from the table.

Rep. Williams explained that she originally thought the bill needed work since she had only heard from one side at the previous meeting. It is her understanding that the bill has now been discussed by multiple parties.

A motion was made by Rep. Lambert and seconded by Rep. Moore to lift SS 1 for SB 101 from the table; motioned carried. Yes=6 (Johnson, Williams, Cooke, Lambert, Moore and Freel); No=4 (Ramone, Spiegelman, Hensley, and Bolden); Absent=1 (Shupe). The bill was lifted from the table.

Chair Johnson introduced **SS 1 for SB 101, AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 25 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE**. With permission from the Chair Rep. Minor-Brown, prime sponsor of the bill, introduced SS 1 for SB 101.

Rep. Minor-Brown stated that all Delawareans regardless of background or circumstance should have stable housing. Before the pandemic, 18,000 eviction cases were filed in the State each year. Rep. Minor-Brown explained that this bill gives tenants the right to legal counsel for households with income levels up to 200 percent above the federal poverty line. She provided the committee with letters of support from Christiana Care and the University of Delaware.

Rep. Minor-Brown called on Daniel Atkins, Executive Director for Community Legal Aid Society, Inc, to further discuss SS 1 to SB 101.

Daniel Atkins stated that Delaware has the fifth highest level of eviction filings in the United States. He explained Delaware's tenant process for the committee and noted that once late payment has been made, landlords can still take that payment and proceed with eviction. Delaware is unique in that corporations do not need a lawyer for landlord tenet court. Completion of Form 50 allows for registered agents to represent their corporation without legal background while tenants are not allowed Form 50 agents. Mr. Atkins stated that over 80 percent of landlords are represented by a lawyer or Form 50 agents while fewer than 5 percent of tenants are represented. Developing from the concern that Covid-19 would cause massive evictions and subsequently stress the public service system, Mr. Atkins formed a bipartisan work group that consisted of landlords and tenants. The workgroup was not able to reach consensus, but leadership sent out correspondence with requests to provide legal representation for tenants and a rule change that allows tenants to be represented by non-attorneys. Mr. Atkins recalled a previous iteration of SB 101 which focused on a pre-filing mediation program, set standards for the minimum amount in dispute, and added the right of redemption. SS 1 includes the clarification that tenants can be represented by non-lawyers, which was contingent on a rule change by the Delaware Supreme Court approved in January of 2022. Additionally, SS 1 removed the minimum amount in dispute, narrowed the application of the right to redemption, and changed mediation from pre-filing to post-filing. Landlords are able to file a motion to opt-out of mediation in certain cases. Mr. Atkins emphasized that if the issue is a monetary matter the tenant will be referred to the Delaware Housing Assistance Program (DHAP).

Mr. Atkins focused on the current status of the bill and went over several changes. SS 1 for SB 101 establishes a coordinator for the eviction process overseen by the Attorney General's Office. The bill clarifies that non-legal representation includes non-attorney actors, refers to DSHA in cases where money is in dispute and allows no appeals if there is no merit. Additionally, the bill clarifies when tenants are to be notified of rights and post-filing mediation is withheld if the tenant poses a risk of harm to person or property.

Mr. Atkins reiterated the purpose of this bill was to help the tenants and to save money for the State. An independent financial group based in New York reviewed Delaware's housing system and found that for every dollar invested into this program, three dollars of savings will be realized.

Rep. Ramone recused himself from voting on SS 1 for SB 101.

Rep. Spiegelman recounted an experience he had with a constituent that moved out of state because of burdensome landlord regulations. He explained that the typical situation of landlords using legal representation is limited to those who can afford to keep lawyers on retainer. Rep. Spiegelman stated that landlords must have legal representation if they are to evict and retain the value of their properties. Smaller landlords begin evictions after their own undocumented mediation practices have taken place. Rep. Spiegelman stated that while the process of eviction may officially be 6 to 8 weeks, in reality evictions can go on for 12 to 16 weeks continuously accumulating costs. SS1 for SB 101 provides legal representation for tenants while smaller landlords will have to buy representation not covered by the State. The practical application of this bill is that small landlords will be pushed out by huge conglomerates adding to the affordable housing crisis in the State.

Mr. Atkins responded that this bill would help Rep. Spiegelman's constituent get his unpaid rent through DHAP and reach resolution through the mediation program without the need of representation. He added that Delaware is not the first to run a program like this and that there is no evidence for Rep. Spiegelman's concerns materializing. Mr. Atkins stated that the current system is under stress and voting no to this bill would actually lead to Rep. Spiegelman's concerns.

Rep. Spiegelman responded that he disagreed and that the current system is in favor of tenants. He reiterated that his constituents have cited this bill as the reason for selling.

Rep. Moore asked how the committee can ensure that renters are protected, and landlords get paid, creating a balance between parties. She asked if the State has enough money in DHAP for the expected increase in mediation from this legislation.

Mr. Atkins stated that the DHAP program has several years' worth of money.

Rep. Cooke asked how Mr. Atkins came to that conclusion.

Mr. Atkins responded that this is based off the pace that the DHAP funding is currently being spent.

Rep. Cooke recalled his experience as a policeman and his many instances in eviction court. He asked for statistics regarding the type of evictions in the State. Rep. Cooke explained that he is very familiar with this topic as his district faces homelessness and housing shortages. He stated the importance of the full committee being present for the discussion of this bill. Rep. Cooke agreed with Rep. Moore on funding and affordable housing issues.

Rep. Spiegelman asked if the DHAP program assists landlord with damages caused by tenants. He obliged to have his question answered by Rachel Stucker during public comment.

Chair Johnson opened the committee floor for public comment.

Rachel Stucker, Housing Alliance Delaware, responded to Rep. Spiegelman and stated that the DHAP funds do not cover damages and that the bill does not prevent landlords from indiscriminately filing evictions. She referenced upcoming Senate legislation that may pertain to Rep. Spiegelman's concerns. Mrs. Stucker emphasized the need for tenant representation and expressed support for the bill

Liz Sudduth, on behalf of Pettinaro Residential, explained that it is not the intention of property managers to see families lose their home. She hopes to see both sides come together and benefit from the bill as landlords currently bear a significant burden.

Antony Sierzega provided written statement from Chief Magistrate Alan Davis, Justice of the Peace Court. The Chief Magistrate stated his support for the bill. The Justice of the Peace Court is the only court in Delaware that allows for non-lawyers to practice before it. This rule has positively affected judicial efficiency but has also left room for inequities, particularly in the case of eviction court. Permitting this bill creates symmetry, promotes procedural fairness, and provides an opportunity for all parties to present their sides and engage in resources that may be mutually advantageous. It is the hope of the Chief Magistrate that representation for tenants' results in frequent work resolutions and benefits the Court.

Frank Brevoort, representing Premium Properties, opposed the bill. Mr. Brevoort explained that while 86 percent of landlords have legal representation, only 12 percent of them have a hired attorney, with the rest opting to self-represent through a Form 50 agent. He added that while Form 50 allows a landlord to self-represent, if the tenant is now afforded a practicing attorney, then the landlord will have to seek paid representation. Mr. Brevoort stated that he does not want to evict anyone and has on average five evictions a year. He explained a recent eviction case where he was forced to file due to the tenant's abusiveness to his wife. Mr. Brevoort stated that if this bill moved forward without amendment, then he would be forced to raise rent on his properties.

Kristine Iannell, on behalf of the Delaware Department of Justice, expressed support for the bill.

Ann Aviles, Associate Professor at the University of Delaware College of Education and Human Development, stated support for the bill. Mrs. Aviles explained her experience in bringing awareness to tenant rights to several Delaware communities. Through her outreach, families have described the challenging and confusing legal system that they do not have time nor the resources to understand. Mrs. Aviles emphasized the need for tenant legal representation as they need someone to guide them through the court process.

Nick Richel, regional property manager for the Galman Group, opposed the bill. Mr. Richel stated that a majority of cases are over non-payment which the property managers work to resolve without eviction. The average delinquency of an evicted tenant is \$8,000 which is typically not recuperated by the landlord. The Galman Group is currently using a similar mediation method described in the bill in Philadelphia. Mr. Richel explained that this method has failed ever since the rental assistance program ran out of money. He added that out of the seventy

cases submitted nine tenants cooperated with the mediation program with only two tenants paying to the agreed amount.

Dr. DeBoral Gilbert White, Founder of HerStory Ensemble, LLC, expressed support for the bill. Dr. White recounted her story of facing eviction for less than one month's rent owed and not knowing how to navigate the legal system.

Abby Halstead, property manager for Westover Companies, opposed the bill. Mrs. Halstead explained that the process to become a Form 50 agent is only the completion of one form and \$20. She added that as a Form 50 agent she has no legal training but represents her entire company. Mrs. Halstead stated the DHAP funding is only for those who can prove that their financial hardships occurred because of the pandemic. She emphasized the need for transparency and exposure of other housing programs.

Shyanne Miller, coordinator of the H.O.M.E.S. campaign, voiced support for the bill. Mrs. Miller stated that tenant resources are often limited, and SB 101 helps with much needed legal representation. She added that the pandemic has exacerbated the instability that many families are facing in the state.

Jeff Sheraton, on behalf of Sheraton Properties, opposed the legislation. Mr. Sheraton read a letter sent out to Sheraton residents explaining that SB 101 would make the eviction process more difficult and costly, leading to increased rent.

Nick Beard, Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence, supported the legislation. Mrs. Beard stated the over 90 percent of homeless women have faced domestic violence. Several domestic violence survivors are not aware of their rights under the violence against women act nor their tenant rights. She stated that this bill will make a big difference to domestic violence survivors.

Bryan O'Neil, representing One-Pie Holdings LLC, opposed the bill. Mr. O'Neil stated that last year he sold his properties in response to City of Wilmington legislation and in anticipation of the passage of SB 101. Mr. O'Neil sold his property to an out-of-state absentee investor.

Sonya Starr presented a letter on behalf of Neil Steinkamp from Stout. Research from districts that have implemented tenant legal right to council demonstrate that tenants face significant reduction in trauma and disruption of local government services. Tenants that seek representation are overwhelmingly Black and Female and often involve harassment and substandard housing. Legal representation is essential to assisting tenants and providing mitigation processes for proper relocation. Stout estimates the fiscal impact of tenant right to council return on investment to be at least \$2.70 per dollar.

Brian Pomije, property manager at Patterson-Schwartz Real Estate and on behalf of the Delaware Association of Realtors, opposed the bill. Mr. Pomije asked the committee to not let this bill leave without further changes. Mr. Pomije stated that there has been a number of attachments made to the bill that have cause most of the funding to go to legal representation sourced from taxpayers. He added that this bill does not utilize the recent change in court proceedings that allow tenants non-lawyer representation. He added that there are lesser-known programs that would be better utilized before persecution begins. Mr. Pomije stated that this bill will cause rent

and evictions to rise.

Christine Schontube, representing the Buccini/Pollin Group, opposed the bill. Mrs. Schontube stated that full occupancy is the primary goal of landlords. She added the cost of hiring an attorney is very high and urged the committee to reconsider the bill as it does not help the housing crisis in the state.

Karl Stomberg expressed support for the bill. Mr. Stomberg stated the bill was not created to simply benefit the tenants but to even the playing field. He stated his worry of possibly facing an eviction case without legal representation as a renter himself.

Debra Burgos, President of the Delaware Apartment Association (DAA), opposed the bill. Mrs. Burgos stated that of the 55,000 rental units in Delaware, the DAA represents over 15 percent. The DAA is finding difficulty in keeping affordable housing in Delaware because of increased costs. Since the court has allowed tenants Form 50 representation, the playing field is already being leveled. Mr. Burgos added that she has aided hundreds of tenants in completing DHAP applications. She reiterated that the processes listed in the bill are already happening and that this bill is unnecessary.

Scott Kidner, representing the DAA and Delaware Association of Realtors (DAR), opposed the current form of the bill. Mr. Kidner explained that housing providers sought out conversation with sponsors of the bill when it was tabled and offered alternatives. Two weeks ago, DAA and DAR offered the committee solutions and alternatives to the bill. This bill is about hiring attorneys, and the DAA and DAR will continue to be in contact as this bill goes through the legislative process. He asked the committee to table the bill.

Sarah Rhine provided testimony on behalf of John Pollock, Coordinator of the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel (NCCRC). The NCCRC has been involved in all successful right to council bills across the country. Results following enactment of these bills shows more people are staying in their homes, and the eviction filing rate has dropped by 30 percent in New York City. In Cleveland, 93 percent of tenants avoided disrupted displacement and a majority of people who stated a want for rental assistance received legal aid. Legal aid played a key role in awareness and ensuring rental assistance which is critical to helping the city emerge from the pandemic.

Annett Fletcher stated support for the bill. Mrs. Fletcher explained that her salary is barely enough to cover her current rent causing her to not always pay on time, however she continues to pay her rent regularly. Mr. Fletcher stated that once her landlord has enough of her late rent or decides to increase rent, she will have to move. She supports the bill as people who are currently struggling may be afforded legal representation.

Priya Hay-Chatterjee expressed support for the bill. Mrs. Hay-Chatterjee is currently looking for housing and discussion surrounding this bill has increased her worries about what she might face if ever against a landlord in court. Mrs. Hay-Chatterjee added her experience if forgetting to pay her rent and receiving a letter from her landlord threatening eviction court if rent was not paid by the end of the month. She added that SB 101 is not special treatment for tenants.

Bryan Boyle, policy director to the New Castle County Executive, voiced support for the bill.

Mr. Boyle stated the evictions often lead to housing instability and homelessness. He added that the pre-litigation mitigation processes will help solve a majority of these cases.

Laura Gendreau, Director of Financial Empowerment at United Way of Delaware, supported the bill. Mrs. Gendreau explained that her program works closely with people in purchasing homes and especially those with housing insecurity. This bill targets the most vulnerable adults that need aid in rental assistance and the legal process. She added that over 85 percent of landlords have legal council compared to the 2 percent of tenants that have representation.

Michael Bannie expressed support for the bill. Mr. Bannie explained that landlords have the upper hand in eviction cases due to their exposure to cases and filing practices. Mr. Bannie stated that a tenant's unfamiliarity with the legal system and hiring of an attorney is very costly to an already accumulating rent debt.

Rachel Krantz stated support for the bill. Mrs. Krantz recalled her experience with several landlords that have held personal grudges and kept security deposit funds. She had very little financial resources to fight for these funds and was forced to give them up. Mrs. Krantz stated that landlords are already raising rent and that motivation behind this increase is not simply because of this bill.

Rep. Freel shared his experience with housing work in the City of Wilmington. Conversations held with landlords and tenants proved to make both sides unhappy and made legislation very hard to pass. Rep. Freel felt as if a similar circumstance was occurring here. He expressed the need to have this bill leave committee and allow it to have a full house vote and emphasized the need for education to reach both tenants and landlords.

Rep. Hensley recused himself from voting on the bill due to a conflict of interest.

A motion was made by Rep. Lambert and seconded by Rep. Williams to release SS 1 for SB 101 from committee; motioned carried. Yes=6 (Johnson, Williams, Cooke, Lambert, Moore, and Freel) ; No=1 (Spiegelman); Abstain=1 (Hensley); Absent=3 (Ramone, Shupe, and Bolden). The bill was released from committee with a F=4, M=2, U=0, vote.

Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Valeria Coverdale, Legislative Fellow

Speaker List:

Rachel Stucker, Housing Alliance Delaware

Liz Sudduth, Pettinaro Residential

Antony Sierzega, Justice of the Peace Court

Frank Brevoort, Premium Properties

Kristine Iannell, Delaware Department of Justice

Ann Aviles, University of Delaware

Nick Richel, Galman Group

Dr. DeBoral Gilbert White HerStory Ensemble, LLC

Abby Halstead, Westover Companies

Shyanne Miller, H.O.M.E.S. campaign

Jeff Sheraton, Sheraton Properties

Nick Beard, Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Bryan O'Neil, One-Pie Holdings

Sonya Starr, Housing Alliance Delaware

Brian Pomije, Patterson-Schwartz Real Estate

Christine Schontube, Buccini/Pollin Group

Karl Stomberg, DE Working Families Party

Debra Burgos, DAA

Scott Kidner, DAA and DAR

Sarah Rhine, NCCRC

Annett Fletcher

Priya Hay-Chatterjee

Bryan Boyle, New Castle Country Executive

Laura Gendreau, United Way of Delaware

Michael Bannie

Rachel Krantz

3.23.22 House Housing & Community Affairs Committee

Public Comment

1. SS1 for SB 101, (Sen. Townsend) Submitted by Dale W. Smith / March 23, 2022 8:49 A.M.

Please vote IN SUPPORT of Senate Bill 101 which will provide low income tenants *right to representation*, in court, if facing eviction.

DWS

Dale W. Smith

2. SS1 for SB 101, (Sen. Townsend) Submitted by Elizabeth Read / March 23, 2022 10:32 A.M.

Dear Representatives:

I urge you to support this Bill. Renters desperately need the protections it would provide: to prevent evictions or at the very least, make the process less painful.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Read

3. SS1 for SB 101, (Sen. Townsend) Submitted by Stephen Metraux / March 23, 2022 1:02 P.M.

March 23, 2022

Committee on Housing & Community Affairs
State of Delaware House of Representatives
housecommitteecomment@delaware.gov

Re: Comments re. SB 101

Dear Honorable Committee on Housing & Community Affairs Members:

I am an Associate Professor at the University of Delaware's Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Policy and Public Administration, where I direct the Center for Community Research & Service. In my career I have done extensive research in, and am considered an expert on housing and homelessness.

In these comments, I'd like to highlight some findings from a study on evictions among adults currently in Delaware's homeless population. These findings, as I'll show at the end of these brief comments, support the need for tenant supports as contained in SB 101.

The findings that I provide here come from matching records on shelter use provided by Housing Alliance Delaware and records on eviction filings from the Delaware Justice of the Peace Courts.

These findings show that, among Delaware's homeless population, eviction is a common occurrence in the 1-year period that precedes their homelessness. Specifically:

- 21% of 1052 adults staying in homeless shelters had a recent record of an eviction filing. This is substantial given that many adults don't have a recent rental history at all before becoming homeless. Furthermore, if you include informal evictions that never make it to a formal eviction filing, this number would certainly increase substantially.
- 43% adults who are homeless with their children have a recent record of an eviction filing. This indicates that almost half of all homeless families had a recent eviction filing prior to becoming homeless.
- Black homeless adults (27%) have about twice the rate of recent eviction histories compared to White homeless adults (14%). This is consistent with research that shows both homelessness and evictions as occurring disproportionately among Blacks.

- Female homeless adults (34%) have a substantially higher rate of eviction histories than male adults (20%). Women typically experience homelessness accompanied by their children.

In summary, many adults experiencing homelessness do so in the wake of having an eviction case. This is even more so among adults in families, among Black homeless adults, and among female homeless adults. SB 101, insofar as it would reduce the numbers of evictions and facilitate outcomes where tenants could maintain housing, would also clearly reduce the people who would then become homeless. This would avoid trauma and misery on an individual level, and, on a community level, would save resources currently expended on providing the homeless population shelter and other services.

A more detailed report on these findings will become available soon. Please contact me at metraux@udel.edu or (267) 319-2555 if I can be of further assistance. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Metraux', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Metraux, Ph.D.

4. SSI for SB 101, (Sen. Townsend) Submitted by Maria Martini Cordonnier / March 23, 2022 2:14 P.M.

Dear Legislators:

The Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States guarantees "equal justice under the law".

There is a Legal Aid Division of the Justice Department to ensure that everyone has the ability to get legal representation, regardless of their financial ability to pay, in order to insure that there is equal representation.

For the most part Landlords have the financial means and access to legal representation while those who are being subject to eviction are less likely to have the financial means and where with all to secure legal advice and or representation.

SB101 proves this point as it states "86% of Landlords have legal representation while just 2% of tenants in the eviction proceedings have access to legal counsel.

There is nothing more traumatic than losing one's home or potentially losing one's home. Often it will be children that may become homeless which can lead to suffering food insecurity, depression, and mental illness. The loss of stability and a feeling of safety can have devastating effects on children.

An eviction conviction can have long lasting consequences besides the loss of home and safety; it can affect one's credit rating and ability to secure another place to live.

Requiring a Coordinator be appointed for this program (as per this Bill), assures that individuals will have access to this service.

Requiring the Coordinator to conduct community outreach and education in regards to the right to council for renters is an important part of this legislation.

Including the provision that the Landlord must provide notice of the right to council periodically during Tenancy and eviction proceedings adds another layer to ensure a renter understands their rights.

I think this is an important bill and would speak well of Delaware's commitment to fairness. I believe this legislation in no way infringes on the rights of the Landlord and makes for a fairer process.

I believe however that pt 3 "legal representation is provided as it is available and does not have cause of action if it is not available", is counter to what the Bill is looking to accomplish.

The legislature should fund this Bill to the extent necessary to ensure that it is available to anyone who needs and wants legal consultation or representation and who qualifies for it.

If this service is not fully funded in SB 101, then it is not in the spirit of the Fourteenth Amendment "equal justice under the law".

It is my hope that those who wrote and co-sponsored this Bill will amend it, and delete pt 3, to ensure that availability to legal counsel for tenants involved in eviction proceedings will be available to all who seeks it.

Regards, Maria Martini Cordonnier

5. *SSI for SB 101, (Sen. Townsend) Submitted by Moira K. Donoghue / March 23, 2022 4:47 P.M.*

To the members of the House Housing & Community Affairs Committee:

Tenants should not lose their homes simply because most don't have legal representation and most landlords do.

- In our adversarial judicial system, justice is more likely when both sides are represented.
- SS1 for SB 101 with HA1 will help to achieve justice in eviction cases by creating a critically needed balance in these cases through the tenant right to representation.
- In addition, the pre-diversion process in the bill will benefit both landlords and tenants by helping to resolve cases prior to eviction. The bill also creates a structure and funding to provide tenant legal representation.
- **Importantly, the bill does not alter the substantive rights of either landlord or tenant in any case. If the landlord should prevail under the law, this bill will not alter that.**

Moira Donoghue, Wilmington

6. *SSI for SB 101, (Sen. Townsend) Submitted by Rumen Mladenov / March 23, 2022 6:03 P.M.*

Please leave this bill tabled.

If passed, this bill will hurt the people it aims to help. As a small landlord, I would do the following:

1) Tighten my screening criteria. If I know I am going to be facing lawyers every time I need to evict, borderline applicants would no longer be approved. Applicants whose income is less than 3x rent amount, credit is less than stellar, or have rental history issues in the past would no longer be considered on a case by case basis - they would be denied, even if that means having the rental property vacant for a month or two until a qualified applicant comes up.

2) Increase the rent on all my tenants to cover for the increased costs I will have due to it taking longer from default to eviction, as well as the need to pay an attorney for eviction cases (I represent myself currently, but if I will face attorneys representing tenants, I will have to hire attorneys as well - unless this bill is amended to provide

free attorneys to small landlords as well?}

Since the eviction moratorium passed at the beginning of the pandemic, it has been very difficult for prospective tenants to be approved for rentals, some qualified applicants tell me they have been applying elsewhere for over 8 months with no success. Rents have increased way faster than inflation as well. Passing this bill would compound this effect and make life that much harder for ordinary people in need of rental housing...

Rumen Mladenov