

## Eviction Prevention Act

Evictions are devastating for tenants, worsening their financial and health outcomes while increasing risk of homelessness. The impacts of eviction are felt disproportionately by children under the age of 18, who make up four in every ten people threatened by eviction each year, and by Black renters, who experience over half of all eviction filings<sup>1</sup>. Evictions are also costly for both renters and landlords. One estimate found that if all 4.2 million adults at risk of eviction were to be evicted in the span of two months, there would be \$6.6 billion in lost earnings, \$5 billion in increased debt for tenants, billions in administrative costs for landlords to serve and process evictions, and significant lost rent for landlords on vacated units<sup>2</sup>.

While the data makes clear the alarming scope and severity of this issue, there remain few federal resources available to tenants who are facing eviction. Notably, tenants frequently do not have access to legal representation during eviction proceedings, dramatically reducing their odds of remaining in their homes. For instance, one study of Philadelphia eviction cases filed between 2012 and 2017 found that tenants with representation were forcibly displaced from their homes in 5% of cases, compared with 78% for unrepresented tenants<sup>3</sup>. Legal support for tenants in eviction proceedings can help keep people housed, leading to better outcomes for tenants, landlords, and communities.

The *Eviction Prevention Act* would help fill a critical need for more federal support to address the rise in housing instability by supporting efforts to connect low-income tenants with legal representation. The Act:

- Authorizes a new grant program for state and local governments to hire attorneys to represent tenants with incomes below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level during eviction proceedings.
- Creates a National Database of Evictions accessible to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to improve the data available on eviction cases.
- Mandates the Government Accountability Office report on limitations of the current legal system for tenants experiencing eviction, the representation rates of tenants and landlords, and potential cost savings for providing renters with legal representation.

These provisions are designed to level the playing field between tenants and landlords, to the benefit of the families who remain in their home or get to transition housing with dignity, as well as the neighborhood, school district, and local employers who benefit from neighbors, students, and employees with a more stable housing situation. By supporting access to representation in eviction proceedings, the Eviction Prevention Act would help keep Pennsylvania families housed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://evictionlab.org/who-is-evicted-in-america/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/end-national-eviction-moratorium-will-be-costly-everyone>

<sup>3</sup> <http://philadelphiabar.org/WebObjects/PBA.woa/Contents/WebServerResources/CMSResources/PhiladelphiaEvictionsReport.pdf>