

July 17, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

The undersigned national associations represent for-profit and non-profit owners, operators, developers and property managers involved in the provision of rental housing, both affordable and conventional. As the Senate develops the next phase of legislation to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, we are writing to share our concerns on proposals that would extend and expand the federal eviction moratorium established under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. A protracted eviction moratorium is not a sustainable, long-term solution for American families facing financial hardship and is ruinous to the rental housing market.

The unique nature of the rental housing industry puts our members on the front lines of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and they take seriously the responsibility to ensure their residents are safe and secure. Housing providers work with those who are impacted by COVID-19 on rent repayment arrangements, waiving fees and connecting them with social service resources. There is a shared goal between providers and residents to preserve housing stability and minimize displacement during this crisis. Extended eviction moratoria undermine these good faith efforts.

Some have proposed applying the CARES Act eviction moratorium to virtually all single family and multifamily homes and extending the covered period for up to 12 months. This protracted eviction moratorium is not tied to those experiencing an impact from COVID-19 and does not address the conditions leading to a renter's housing instability. When rent stops flowing, outstanding amounts compound month after month and the risk increases that renters will be unable to catch up. When the rent stops flowing, the revenue that is needed to pay employee salaries, mortgages, property taxes, cleaning, maintenance and utilities vanishes. In the end, the financial solvency of rental housing is at risk, especially for the smaller firms who make up the majority of the industry.

Federal eviction restrictions can also frustrate state and local efforts to stabilize their housing market and address local conditions. An overlapping, lengthy federal moratorium can needlessly create duplicative, sometimes counterproductive, provisions and complicate compliance for housing providers. State and local officials are best situated to deploy the housing support and renter protections most appropriate for their circumstances, given the unique eviction laws and judicial processes across jurisdictions.

Proposals to extend the eviction moratorium also have unintended consequences for housing affordability as they endanger critical new development and rehabilitation of rental housing. It would create additional, unmanageable risk along with compromised property operations that can seriously discourage investment at a time when the nation needs more rental housing to meet its growing needs.

We believe the best way to protect the housing of those who have been impacted by COVID-19 is through robust financial assistance such as an emergency rental assistance

program or other programs designed to keep renters from ever missing rental payments. It is Congress' efforts thus far to provide robust financial assistance to households and businesses impacted by COVID-19 that have prevented widespread evictions and ensured the continued viability of the rental housing industry.

For the reasons expressed above, our organizations are opposed to blanket extensions of the CARES Act eviction moratorium. As the Senate considers additional COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts, we urge support for comprehensive and well-balanced housing policy that assists both residents and property owners. We remain committed to working with you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

Council for Affordable and Rural Housing

Manufactured Housing Institute

National Affordable Housing Management Association

National Apartment Association

National Association of Home Builders

National Association of Residential Property Managers

National Multifamily Housing Council