



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

## Release: NYS Legislators Urge Governor Cuomo to Extend Eviction Moratorium Beyond June 20th, to Protect Tenants for Duration of the Health and Economic Crisis

BRIAN KAVANAGH June 18, 2020

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***NYS Legislators Urge Governor Cuomo to Extend Eviction Moratorium Beyond June 20th, to Protect Tenants for Duration of the Health and Economic Crisis***

New York, NY – A group of 56 New York State legislators urged Governor Cuomo to prevent an imminent mass housing crisis by extending the eviction moratorium order, protecting all tenants for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis. The group, led by State Senator Brian Kavanagh, Chair of the Senate Housing Committee; Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; Assemblymember Steven Cymbrowitz, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Housing; and State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Chair of the Senate Committee on Health, sent a letter to the Governor noting that the original eviction moratorium order he issued in March was due to expire on June 20th. A second order issued in May, and set to replace the existing order after June 20th, significantly diminished the protections available to tens of thousands of tenants who have struggled to pay their rent, or whose leases may have expired during the economic shutdown.

The group also expressed concern over the Office of Court Administration's decision to reopen Housing Court. They urged the Governor to put an immediate pause on all non-emergency housing legal proceedings, and to direct New York Civil Courts to immediately stop "virtually" processing any eviction cases.

"Given the depth of the crisis, we are extremely concerned about mass evictions and displacement after June 20. Right now, New Yorkers should not have to worry about their most basic needs, like housing. All of their focus should be on the health and safety of their loved ones," the group wrote.

The letter goes on to say that unlike the initial order, which protected tenants from eviction and relieved the physical danger of contracting or spreading the virus that families would face were they forced into a crowded courthouse or displaced from their home, the new order puts the onus on tens of thousands of tenants who will be required to prove their need

in order to be protected.

It also notes that the order fails to protect tenants who are sued in holdover cases that landlords may bring to evict those with expired leases. The new order therefore puts all tenants at risk of eviction and increases their risk of contracting the deadly COVID-19 virus, first from overcrowded courts and ultimately, for many, from shelters and homelessness.

"Given the unimaginable and unprecedented loss we've already faced as New Yorkers, we urge you to issue an order protecting ALL tenants, extending a universal eviction moratorium for the duration of the crisis," the group said in the letter.

"New Yorkers shouldn't have to choose between their health and their homes," stated **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**. "This is not the time to ease up on the actions that helped keep New Yorkers out of harm's way. We need the Governor to amend the extended moratorium before the Housing Court reopens."

"The COVID-19 crisis continues for millions of New Yorkers who cannot afford to pay their rent and are terrified of what will happen to them and their families the day after the eviction moratorium ends," said **Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal**. "You cannot quarantine safely at home if you are homeless. Allowing landlords to evict tenants en masse during a global pandemic is not good for public health and will not help to make landlords whole. In addition to becoming sick themselves or losing loved ones to the virus, COVID-19 has caused millions of New Yorkers to lose their jobs."

"Tenants who have been struggling with financial insecurity during this global crisis should not have to worry about being cast out from their homes at a time when so many other larger issues, like health and safety, clearly should take precedence," said **Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz**, Chair of the Assembly's Housing Committee. "I join my colleagues in asking that

Governor Cuomo issue an eviction moratorium that protects all New York tenants for the duration of the crisis and order the court system to fully close for all eviction proceedings."

"The COVID-19 crisis has dealt a devastating financial blow to many New Yorkers, especially those in low-income communities, with many of them losing their jobs and their ability to cover basic needs including rent. While the current eviction moratorium was welcomed by tenants across the State, it is certainly not enough given the severity of this crisis," said **State Senator Gustavo Rivera**. "If the State lifts this moratorium, a floodgate will open that will be too difficult to contain and will put hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers at risk of eviction and homelessness. We must prioritize the safety and health of all New Yorkers by fully extending our State's eviction moratorium and halting all evictions."

Before the virus, more than half of all renters in New York were considered rent-burdened. Since mid-March, nearly 885,000 private sector jobs have been lost in New York City and the state is currently grappling with a 14.2% unemployment rate.

"As New Yorkers struggle to put food on the table, mourn the loss of loved ones, and find ways to make it out to work every day in the middle of a pandemic, we hope the last thing they will have to worry about is losing their home," stated the group in the letter.

For a copy of the full letter, click [here](#).

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