



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT

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Testimony Re: Senate Bill 183 Re: Residential Landlord and Tenant Act – Eviction and Foreclosure Moratorium

Senate Judiciary Committee

March 11, 2021

Stephanie Geller, Deputy Director

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for Senate Bill 183. This bill would protect landlords and tenants during the COVID-19 pandemic and during future states of emergency, whether the emergency is a natural disaster, pandemic, or other crisis.

Why Is this legislation needed?

The current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Moratorium on evictions protects only a subset of households from being evicted, tenants who are being evicted for nonpayment, and not those who are being evicted for other reasons, such as tenants with month-to-month leases. And, even more concerning, the CDC Moratorium is set to expire on March 31, 2021, less than three weeks from today, and well before scientists recommend that restrictions on movement and socializing can be safely lifted.

Eviction moratoriums during public health emergencies, like the one we are currently experiencing, keep families and individuals safely housed and prevent them from having to move into crowded shelters, from doubling up with friends or families, or from being forced to live outdoors – all circumstances that would put them (and others) at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to Senator Euer, Senate President Ruggiero, and Senators McCaffrey, Goodwin, Cano, Mack, Kallman, Lombardo, Valverde, and DiMario for sponsoring this bill and thank you to this Committee for acting with urgency on housing issues that affect so many Rhode Islanders, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when so many families are facing unemployment, reduced wages, and the fear of losing their homes.

We urge you to act now to protect our families and our communities from harm during the current COVID-19 pandemic and future public health crises.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.