



Legislative Building

Washington State Legislature

Olympia, WA 98504-0600

June 22, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Governor Inslee,

Thank you for your leadership to ensure that Washington's renters have been protected from evictions and homelessness since the beginning of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Your leadership and actions have prioritized the safety of Washington's renters and undoubtedly have saved countless lives. However, the undersigned lawmakers believe that if eviction protections are not extended past the current September 30th end date of your most recent proclamation, Washington will experience the eviction and homelessness crisis that we have been working so hard to avoid.

Recently U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Attorney General Merrick Garland and HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge issued a joint letter¹ to Governors and local government leaders across the country urgently requesting your help to prevent unnecessary evictions during the pandemic. **Today we are writing in support of their request to extend our eviction moratorium for the remainder of the public health emergency.**

Washington state has seen a dramatic increase in individuals experiencing homelessness. It is impacting every community across the state. With hundreds of thousands of renters now at risk for eviction and homelessness we recognize the need to act boldly. We urge you to extend protections that are desperately needed to prevent adding hundreds, or thousands, of individuals and families to our existing homelessness crisis.

You signed into law significant protections for renters that the legislature passed in the last session. We have done much, and yet we know there remains much to do. We will continue to grapple with the enormous challenge ahead of us to recover from the devastating impacts of this pandemic, particularly on the impact it has had on those who are most at risk of homelessness. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you in this upcoming legislative session on those challenges. However, we know more must be done right now, and we are urging you to act quickly.

Thank you for all you have done, and all that you are doing, to help ease the suffering of so many who have been impacted.

¹ https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PA/documents/DOT_DOJ_HUD_JOINT_LETTER.pdf

Sincerely,



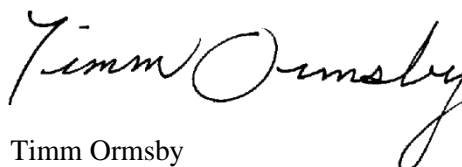
Davina Duerr
State Representative, 1st Legislative District



Derek Stanford
State Senator, 1st Legislative District



Marcus Riccelli
State Representative, 3rd Legislative District



Timm Ormsby
State Representative, 3rd Legislative District



Bill Ramos
State Representative, 5th Legislative District



Lisa Callan
State Representative, 5th Legislative District



David Hackney
State Representative, 11th Legislative District



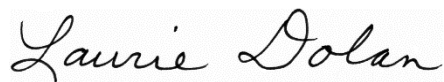
Strom Peterson
State Representative, 21st Legislative District



Lillian Ortiz-Self
State Representative, 21st Legislative District



Marko Liias
State Senator, 21st Legislative District



Laurie Dolan
State Representative, 22nd Legislative District



Jessica Bateman
State Representative, 22nd Legislative District



Sam Hunt
State Senator, 22nd Legislative District



Tara Simmons
State Representative, 23rd Legislative District



Emily Randall
State Senator, 26th Legislative District



Jeannie Darneille
State Senator, 27th Legislative District



T'wina Nobles
State Senator, 28th Legislative District



Melanie Morgan
State Representative, 29th Legislative District



Jesse Johnson
State Representative, 30th Legislative District



Jamila Taylor
State Representative, 30th Legislative District



Claire Wilson
State Senator, 30th Legislative District



Cindy Ryu
State Representative, 32nd Legislative District



Lauren Davis
State Representative, 32nd Legislative District



Mia Gregerson
State Representative, 33rd Legislative District

Tina Orwall
State Representative, 33rd Legislative District

Karen Keiser
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Joe Fitzgibbon
State Representative, 34th Legislative District

Joe Nguyen
State Senator, 34th Legislative District

Noel Frame
State Representative, 36th Legislative District

Liz Berry
State Representative, 36th Legislative District

Sharon Tomiko Santos
State Representative, 37th Legislative District

Kirsten Harris-Talley
State Representative, 37th Legislative District

Rebecca Saldaña
State Senator, 37th Legislative District

Emily Wicks
State Representative, 38th Legislative District

Mike Sells
State Representative, 38th Legislative District

Debra Lekanoff
State Representative, 40th Legislative District



Alex Ramel
State Representative, 40th Legislative District



Liz Lovelett
State Senator, 40th Legislative District



Tana Senn
State Representative, 41st Legislative District



My-Linh Thai
State Representative, 41st Legislative District



Lisa Wellman
State Senator, 41st Legislative District



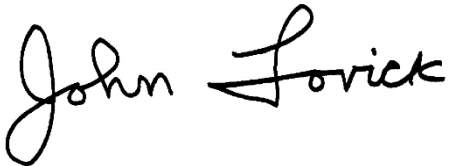
Nicole Macri
State Representative, 43rd Legislative District



Frank Chopp
State Representative, 43rd Legislative District



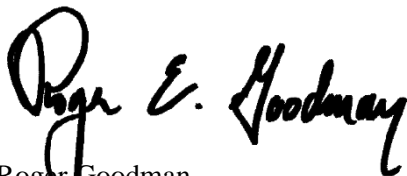
Jamie Pedersen
State Senator, 43rd Legislative District



John Lovick
State Representative, 44th Legislative District



April Berg
State Representative, 44th Legislative District



Roger Goodman
State Representative, 45th Legislative District



Manka Dhingra
State Senator, 45th Legislative District



Gerry Pollet
State Representative, 46th Legislative District



Javier Valdez
State Representative, 46th Legislative District



Patty Kuderer
State Senator, 48th Legislative District



Vandana Slatter
State Representative, 48th Legislative District

COVID-19 Impacts on Renters in WA

- According to the latest information available from the Washington State Department of Commerce, Washington ranks as number 15 in the nation in terms of rental assistance distribution through July 2021. **However, millions of dollars remain undistributed and many renters will face evictions and homelessness on October 1 while waiting for their applications to be processed.** Rental assistance providers across the state are working in earnest to distribute the unprecedented amount of funds appropriated for rental assistance. Over \$1 billion in state and federal funds were earmarked for rental assistance and there has never previously been an investment of this magnitude to prevent and end homelessness. The funds met an overwhelmed and understaffed crisis response system that has been moving mountains since the beginning of the pandemic to keep their communities safe. But more time is needed. It would be a tremendous tragedy if evictions opened before rental assistance funds have an opportunity to save homes.
 - **Washington's BIPOC renters and families with children under 18 are most at risk.** Throughout the pandemic, disparities in impact have been consistent. According to the Census Bureau's Pulse Survey, Washington's Latinx and Black renters have consistently faced more housing hardship and risk of eviction and homelessness. This tracks closely to the disparate impact of the pandemic and economic downfall on these same communities. Further, renter households with children under 18 are also disproportionately at risk. If protections are not extended past September 30th, these communities will experience a disparate impact of evictions and homelessness.
 - **173,589** tenants in Washington State reported being behind on rent. This comprises 11% of all tenants and is up by almost 25,000 from the previous two weeks.
 - **83,503** of these renters are in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metro area. This is 48% of the renters who are behind in rent.
 - **Significant disparities persist:**
 - Hispanic/Latino/Latinx renters = 18% are behind
 - White renters = 9% are behind
 - Black renters = 27% are behind
 - Asian renters = 9% are behind
 - Renters with two or more races = 14% are behind
 - **22% of renters with children under 18 in the household are behind in rent.** In comparison to 8% for renters without children under 18 in the household.
 - The numbers speak to a potential new wave of households in need of rental assistance and eviction protections:
 - **256,239** renters reported being not at all or only slightly confident in their ability to pay September's rent.
 - **Over 60,000** renters reported feeling that it was very or somewhat likely that they would be evicted within the next two months.
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- **65,354** tenants who are current on rent reported that they were relying on unemployment to meet their basic needs. **All of these renters lost \$300 in benefits per week and some of these renters lost unemployment benefits entirely after September 4th** (The Seattle Times estimates that 120,000 people in Washington State will be entirely losing benefits) while tens of thousands more have lost the additional \$300 week in benefits.
 - **398,861** tenants who are current on rent reported that they were relying on unsustainable means to meet their basic needs including credit cards or loans, money from savings or selling assets, borrowing from friends and family and federal stimulus payments.
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