

May 20, 2020

Chairperson Welch and esteemed members of the Executive Committee,

Please allow me to thank you for your consideration of House Bill 5574, amended by House Amendment 1, to ensure that we are doing everything possible for Illinois tenants and homeowners in this pandemic. I am a proponent of the bill, and I believe we must pass it with all due haste.

I am an immunocompromised individual with disabilities who has been quarantining myself nearly every single day since the start of shelter-in-place. In the best of times, my Social Security Disability payment every month doesn't quite cover my rent, and I am dependent on the generosity of friends and family to ensure I don't end up on the streets and, inevitably, dead. With my support network under the unusual strain of this pandemic, I spend every day fighting for housing for all in part because I know that one bad day could mean disaster for me, just as it already has for so many others.

There is virtually no one who is unaffected by the crisis at hand. Directly or indirectly, we have seen nothing this dire since the Great Depression, economically. The answer is not to open the state but rather to ensure that we do not need to open for the protection of as many people as possible. To do that, we need to ensure that very important human right, housing. Housing and healthcare have always been tightly bound, but never moreso than when it is a literal barrier to a deadly virus.

Let's pass this bill and ensure that no one is kicked out on the street because of this pandemic. Let's ensure that all can shelter in place. If anything, we must go back after this bill and make sure that more people, the unhoused, those in congregate care, people in prisons, all have better options and are afforded the same rights to life, health, and housing as the rest of us.

With deep thanks,

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