

Support COVID-19 Emergency Eviction Protections

(Rep. Ramirez, Sen. Peters)

The pandemic has only exacerbated the eviction crisis. In these uncertain times, no one should fear losing their home.

COVID-19 has caused unprecedented economic instability for renters across Illinois. Though there is a moratorium on evictions and a fund to provide rental assistance, there is not enough funding available to help everyone in need. The Federal Government's failure to pass another COVID-relief package only exacerbates this crisis. As a result, an influx of eviction filings once the moratorium is lifted and courts reopen is inevitable.

To curb the number of eviction filings once the moratorium is lifted, tenants should be able to work out a payment plan with their landlords without fear of eviction. Illinois law currently allows landlords to file evictions if any rental amount is owed, even if a tenant is making best efforts to pay past due rent.

Renters should also not face permanent housing instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An eviction record, including even the mere filing of a case, hampers a tenant's ability to secure housing. Landlords frequently deny a tenant's application because of a single eviction record—even when the case was dismissed, filed many years ago, or brought on unlawful grounds.

This bill would protect tenants from the long-term consequences of eviction records and prevent eviction filings where the tenant is attempting to pay in good faith by:

- **Prohibiting landlords from filing evictions if they accept partial rent payments from their tenants** by temporarily eliminating the need for landlords and tenants to enter into written agreements to prevent an eviction case.
- **Expanding tenants ability to seal prior eviction records** if doing so is in the interests of justice, the parties agree to seal the court file, the tenant did not violate the lease, or there was no judgment entered against the tenant.
- **Prohibiting tenant screening companies from disseminating a sealed eviction court record.**
- **Sealing eviction cases filed during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery period (March 9, 2020 - September 2022).**

Key Statistics

- The *ASPEN Institute* estimates between 31% and 51% of Illinois renters are at risk of eviction, impacting up to 1,753,000 Illinoisans.
- Only 30,000 households are being assisted under IHDA's Emergency Rental Assistance Program.
- In 2017, 23 of the 25 community areas in Chicago with the highest eviction filing rates were majority Black Community Areas.



A stronger Illinois begins at home

