

JEWISH COMMUNITY ACTION

February 26, 2021

The Honorable Jamie Becker-Finn, Chair
Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
559 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Peggy Scott, GOP Lead
Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
335 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Kelly Moller, Vice Chair
Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
569 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 1060 – Eviction Court Reform Bill

Dear Chair Becker-Finn, Vice Chair Moller, GOP Lead Scott, and Members of the Committee:

We are writing you today to express our strong commitment to maintaining stable and affordable housing in Minnesota – a foundation for economic well-being. Currently, in eviction cases, the court process promotes housing instability as it simply doesn't allow the tenant enough time to prepare an adequate defense or find emergency financial assistance. Together, we have an opportunity to reform the court eviction process and create a more just housing system in Minnesota. Jewish Community Action writes today in support of HF 1060 – a bill seeking to reform the court eviction process.

Eviction cases have a much shorter timeline than all other regular cases, and Minnesota, at its quickest, has one of the fastest eviction processes in the country. Eviction, unlike, say a dispute over a car purchase, has the most serious consequence: losing one's home and possibly not being able to find housing for years. As organizers, we recognize that the current eviction court system perpetuates the substantial power imbalance between the parties to the disadvantage of the renter facing eviction, and it exacerbates institutional racial disparities.

Studies and the experience of lawyers representing tenants show that there is a valid legal defense in 70% of cases; tenants need more time than they currently have to find legal help and advice and prepare a defense. HF 1060 intends to give people facing the loss of their home through eviction more time to:

- (1) find legal help;
- (2) prepare a defense; and
- (3) find financial resources from public programs or family or elsewhere to maintain housing stability

Let's work together to strengthen Minnesotan communities by ensuring stable housing – an essential foundation to a healthy, happy life.

On behalf of Jewish Community Action,
Maddie Etienne – Legislative Advocate and Dave Snyder – Organizing Director