



March 23, 2023

Dear Chair Becker-Fnn and Members of the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee:

On behalf of the Homes for All coalition, we write in support of HF 917, which makes a number of long-overdue changes to make tenant-landlord law more tenant-friendly. Homes for All represents over 270 organizations across the state that advocate for safe, accessible, stable, and affordable housing across the housing continuum. Our coalition represents the full continuum of housing, from services for people experiencing homelessness, to permanent supportive housing, to affordable rental options, to homeownership opportunities for Minnesotans.

For us, housing is about more than just focusing on affordability, as Minnesota tenants also deserve safe, stable, and quality housing. HF 917 helps address the power imbalance in the tenant-landlord relationship, which currently favors landlords. Landlords write the leases; Minnesota renters need the law – which hasn't changed significantly in decades – to provide reasonable protections.

There's much to like in HF 917, but we'll focus on four of the proposed changes, which will be transformative should they become law:

1. A 14-day pre-eviction notice would provide tenants an opportunity to fix the problem, negotiate an agreement with their landlord, or quit the lease and vacate the apartment unit, making an eviction filing unnecessary. The pre-eviction notice would include information on how tenants can seek legal help and apply for emergency financial assistance.
2. Eviction reporting would be prohibited until a court judgement is rendered in favor of the landlord. This gives a tenant the opportunity to remedy the situation before it harms their record.
3. The court would order an expungement if: a) the tenant prevailed; b) the case was dismissed; c) the parties agreed to an expungement or upon request of the tenant if the case was settled and the tenant fulfilled the terms; d) the eviction was ordered three or more years ago.
4. As is the case in a number of other states, Minnesota renters could not be discriminated against based on the source of income they receive. Housing subsidies such as Section 8 (federal) or Bridges vouchers (state) would assist tenants in paying their rent, not be the reason a landlord could discriminate against them.

Again, this bill proposes long-overdue, but transformative measures that will help Minnesota renters secure and maintain safe, stable, and quality housing. We urge you to support HF 917.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Michael Dahl  
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Homes for All Policy Co-Chair

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