



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: WHEREAS, housing is a human right and it is axiomatic that economic security is fundamental to public health, and that we as a society are only as healthy as those most vulnerable, least economically secure, and least covered by our social services; and

Sponsors: Deborah L. Gross, All Members

Indexes: PROCLAMATION - MS. GROSS

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WHEREAS, housing is a human right and it is axiomatic that economic security is fundamental to public health, and that we as a society are only as healthy as those most vulnerable, least economically secure, and least covered by our social services; and

WHEREAS, nearly 400,000 Pennsylvanians were behind on rent as of August 2020, and nearly 20,000 Pittsburgh renter households have spent more than half of their income on rent in 2020; and

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, September 1, 2020, during a one-day lapse in eviction moratorium coverage, 181 eviction claims were filed in Allegheny County, roughly three times the amount of filings on a typical day before the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Research by University of Pennsylvania associate professor Dr. Michael Z. Levy models that for every 60 evictions, the United States will experience one additional death due to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Black families in Pittsburgh are more likely to be renters, and are disproportionately impacted by the financial and health impacts of the COVID-19 virus; and

WHEREAS, housing instability negatively impacts children's physical and emotional wellbeing, and Pittsburgh Public Schools are currently educating 23,000 children remotely, and a stable home is essential for children's educational success; and

WHEREAS, it is accordingly clear that we must do all we can to keep people secure enough to take care of themselves, practice social distancing, have a location in which to shelter and store supplies, and endure a quarantine or treatment if required; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization ("WHO") has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global

pandemic, defined as the worldwide spread of a new virus for which most people do not have immunity; and

WHEREAS, as of November 27, 2020, Allegheny County has reported 26,821 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 498 deaths; and

WHEREAS, on November 18, 2020, the Allegheny County Health Department issued recommendations intended to reduce the incidence of new COVID-19 cases, specifically through the avoidance of all non-essential travel, as well as all nonessential public and private gatherings outside of individuals' own households; and

WHEREAS, according to current models promulgated by healthdata.org, daily deaths caused by COVID-19 are expected to be between 1,172 (if masks are universally required) and 4,689 (If mask mandates are eased) in the United States by early February of 2021, with a total of 370,000 and 587,000 predicted COVID-19 related deaths in the United States by March 21, 2021; and

WHEREAS, while estimates regarding a reasonable timeline for availability of a COVID-19 vaccine vary, most sources appear to suggest that a vaccine could become widely available at some point in the spring or summer of 2021; and

WHEREAS, it is the judgment of Council that the health, safety, and well-being of the City's population would be endangered by a large number of evictions before a vaccine is available; and

WHEREAS, on May 27, 2020, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued an order authorizing President Judges in the various judicial districts to continue exercising emergency powers under the Rules of Judicial Administration, 201 Pa.Code §1952(B)(2), which expressly grants broad authority to the President Judges of the Courts of Common Pleas to restructure court proceedings in response to emergencies, and it appears that this order is still in effect as of the date of this Resolution;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh hereby calls on the Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania to extend the moratorium on filing new actions for evictions for non-payment of rent or lease under the terms of the Landlord Tenant Act of 1951 until at least October 1, 2021. Council further calls upon the Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania to extend an identical moratorium on proceedings relating to all such eviction actions for cases filed after March 16, 2020.