

A Win For Renters: HB 374

This legislative session, advocates and renters like Arielle Butler worked with Rep. Royce Duplessis to pass HB 374, which will go into effect on August 1, 2021. This is a great win for Louisiana renters, especially those who were financially affected by the pandemic.

Having an eviction in your rental history can make it difficult to find new housing. Many landlords refuse to rent to potential tenants if they have had a past eviction. During the COVID-19 pandemic a much greater number of families experienced financial hardship and faced eviction after being laid off or while waiting on unemployment benefits. No one should be denied a new home because of an eviction they experienced during the pandemic.



Arielle Butler, mom and activist who faced eviction during COVID-19.

HB 374 takes a step in the right direction to protect renters who faced hardship due to a state or federally declared disaster. Landlords who use tenant screening companies will now be required to allow renters to provide context for any COVID-era evictions in their rental application. Allowing this kind of hardship statement means potential landlords will be able to tell that the eviction came from an unforeseeable event.

Any landlord that charges an application fee must include a question on their application that:

- Allows an applicant to explain that they've faced a hardship that effected their credit, employment or rental history
- The hardship must be the result of a state or federally declared disaster or emergency, such as the pandemic or a hurricane.
- The statement must be 200 words or less.

Additionally, HB 374 requires landlords to disclose how they make their decisions BEFORE charging an application fee. The new rule requires landlords who charge application fees to tell tenants the amount of the application fee and whether the landlord considers:

- credit scores
 - employment history
 - criminal history
 - eviction records
- If a landlord charges you an application fee without sharing this information or without a question allowing you to share a hardship statement, please contact the Louisiana Fair Housing Action Center at 504-596-2100 or through our website at info@lafairhousing.org.



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