

September 8th, 2020

Office of Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan,

Today, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage our communities, we thank you for your stalwart leadership throughout this crisis and ask you to continue it by keeping Minnesotans in their homes during this difficult time. In Minnesota, like so many places, renters face increased risk compared to homeowners because they don't have the same kind of rights or protections under the law. Furthermore, renters in our communities are far more likely to be people of color and indigenous people, who already live with some of the worst racial disparities in the country. And while we are One Minnesota, the impacts of the pandemic and economic crisis do not treat us as such. Inequities in health, income, housing stability and employment have been exacerbated in each of our communities. This not only disparately impacts low-wealth households and households of color, but weakens our ability to recover from the pandemic and economic crisis as a collective.

Nationally, the U.S. is poised to face a tidal wave of evictions as moratoria expire around the country, with 30-40 million renters at risk of eviction in the coming months, according to the Washington Post. New data released last month by [Stout](#), a global advisory firm, projects 197,000 Minnesota renter households will be unable to pay rent, leading to 133,000 potential eviction filings over the next four months. This does not even take into account the pending impacts of the loss of additional CARES unemployment funds, which were a critical lifeline to many households through the month of July. Safe and secure housing is still a leading public health strategy to contain COVID-19, and your executive power and leadership matter more than ever to maintain public health and safety.

The initial eviction moratorium put in place by executive order was a critical step in preventing so many renters from being kicked out of their homes, and the time has come to take the next step and strengthen that protection. As local elected leaders from across the state who represent and serve thousands of Minnesotans experiencing homelessness and housing instability every day, we are asking you to consider the following:

- **No additional exemptions to the evictions moratorium.** This pandemic has been catastrophic for so many people, but that doesn't mean it has impacted everyone in the same way. The more carve-outs and exemptions we create, the more likely Minnesotans fall through the cracks and lose their home at the most vulnerable moment in their lives. Even with the broad moratorium, the Attorney General's office has received more than 1200 complaints from renters who have been threatened by their landlords with unlawful

displacement. We only expect that number to grow as the rollbacks implemented on August 12th are taken advantage of.

- **Extend the evictions moratorium in place through the end of the year (2020) and through the end of the economic crisis created by COVID-19.** As we continue to wait for any additional support from the federal government, it is critical that states like Minnesota continue to show leadership by ensuring renters housing stability at a time when so much else is in chaos.
- **Make additional rental assistance available to people who are at risk of losing their homes at the scale necessary to avert mass displacement.** Halting evictions alone won't solve the catastrophic financial challenges thousands of people are facing due to loss or reduction of employment, cost of health challenges, and more. We need a long-term strategy to address the rental costs that, even if deferred, will as of now still be required to be paid back. **This also must include a longer notice period before evictions are filed** so that people have the opportunity to access resources, as well as an **extended period of time for people to pay back past due rent.**
- **Automatic expungement of illegally filed evictions.** When an eviction is filed against someone, it creates permanent harm to renters as long as it remains on their record. Unless there is a policy that automatically expunges evictions, the burden of addressing illegal evictions will rest with renters.

We appreciate the leadership your office has shown so far to support those who are most at-risk during the COVID-19 pandemic and we are asking you to continue that leadership moving forward.

Sincerely,

Mike Elliott
Mayor
Brooklyn Center, Minnesota

Mary Supple
City Councilmember - At Large
Richfield, Minnesota

Cam Gordon
City Councilmember - Ward 2
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Kissy Coakley
City Councilmember - Ward 4
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Maria Regan Gonzalez
Mayor
Richfield, Minnesota

Ben Whalen
City Councilmember - Ward 3
Richfield, Minnesota

Debbie Goettel
County Commissioner - District 5
Hennepin County, Minnesota

Shep Harris
Mayor
Golden Valley, Minnesota

Jeremy Schroeder
City Councilmember - Ward 11
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Irene Fernando
County Commissioner - District 2
Hennepin County, Minnesota

Margaret Rog
City Councilmember - Ward 1
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

Jeremiah Ellison
City Councilmember - Ward 5
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Steve Fletcher
City Councilmember - Ward 3
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Mitra Jalali
City Councilmember - Ward 4
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Rebecca Noecker
City Councilmember - Ward 2
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Carlos Mariáni Rosa
State Representative - House District 65B
Saint Paul & Ramsey County, Minnesota

Angela Conley
County Commissioner - District 4
Hennepin County, Minnesota

Kimberly Sanberg
City Councilmember - At Large
Golden Valley, Minnesota

Rafael E. Ortega
County Commissioner - District 5
Ramsey County, Minnesota

Jane L. Prince
City Councilmember - Ward 7
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Tim Brausen
City Councilmember - Ward 4
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

Nathan Coulter
City Councilmember - At Large
Bloomington, Minnesota

Jenna Carter
City Councilmember - At Large
Bloomington, Minnesota

Melvin Carter
Mayor
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Chris Tolbert
City Councilmember - Ward 3
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Jacob Frey
Mayor
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Andrea Jenkins
City Councilmember - Ward 8
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Lisa Bender
City Council President - Ward 10
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Larry Kraft
City Councilmember - At Large
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

Amy Brendmoen
City Council President - Ward 5
Saint Paul, Minnesota

cc: Minnesota Executive Council Members:
Secretary of State Steve Simon
State Auditor Julie Blaha
Attorney General Keith Ellison