

Written Submission to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Re: Bill 184

Submitted by: 440 Winona Tenant Association

17 June, 2020

We have very serious concerns about the proposed Bill 184. Many of the residents in our building are newcomers and do not know their rights as tenants. Our Association was formed because of numerous reports of improper and illegal evictions, improper maintenance, pest infestations, illegal rent increases and surcharges, and unjust and discriminatory treatment by the building staff. Many times this unjust treatment and or illegal evictions succeeds, because tenants do not know their rights, or are afraid to assert their rights. At this time, we know of at least several tenants in our building who are not able to pay their rent in full, due to COVID19 related job loss. This Bill will make it even more difficult for tenants to defend themselves in these very challenging economic times. Through no fault of their own, many of our tenants have lost employment, even temporarily, and are struggling to pay rent.

Bill 184 allows for an illegal rent increase to become legal if the tenant doesn't file an application to fight the increase within one year. Why at this time is the government proposing this? This is unjust. Many of our tenants are low income and live on very tight budgets, and recent job losses has put a big strain on families.

Bill 184 would also make it easier for landlords to evict tenants. Tenants facing eviction for non-payment of rent would no longer be allowed to raise new issues, such as disrepair, at their appeal hearing unless they formally applied to introduce that matter in advance. Currently, if a tenant reaches an agreement on repaying rent arrears prior to a hearing, and if the tenant fails to fulfill that agreement, the tenant is entitled to a hearing before eviction can proceed. Bill 184 would allow our landlord to proceed straight to an eviction order without a hearing. Aside from the traumatic upheaval of an eviction, given the housing and rental market in Toronto, any tenant who gets evicted will probably be forced to relocate to a neighbourhood far away. Many of our tenants are seniors whose lives would be very seriously affected by the trauma of eviction.

As we write this to you, we can tell you that the landlord continues to threaten tenants with illegal eviction notices during this emergency period, despite the suspension of eviction hearings and orders.

In our opinion, in these critical economic times this government should be taking forceful action to protect tenants from losing their homes because they couldn't afford to pay rent during the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge you, do not approve this Bill and instead focus on supporting vulnerable residents of Toronto and Ontario.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Abdisa Ayana, Chair 440 Winona Tenant Association

Yeneneh Eshatu, Co-Chair 440 Winona Tenant Association

In our opinion, in these critical economic times this government should be taking forceful action to protect tenants from losing their homes because they couldn't afford to pay rent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please do not approve this Bill and instead focus on supporting some of the more vulnerable residents of Toronto.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Abdisa Ayana

440 Winona Tenants Association chair

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