



JUNE 26, 2020

Statement on Bill-184, *Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Communities Housing Act*

The need for housing is at its most critical juncture. The Ontario government's decision to advance legislation that does not favour renters will hurt vulnerable renters during and post COVID-19. While the title of Bill-184 suggests the protection of tenants, the proposed policies under the Residential Tenancies Act suggest otherwise.

Covid-19 has impacted all, however, Ontario's most vulnerable communities and residents are impacted more. A combination of housing, financial and employment insecurity puts many individuals and families at high-risk of poverty and homelessness in a post-Covid-19 world. Poverty and homelessness affect many Peel residents. Below is a high-level snapshot of Peel's housing, homelessness, and low-income data.

- 12.8% of Peel's residents live in poverty*
 - 18% are children ages 0-17
 - 16% are racialized (visible minority communities)
- 70% of Peel households can't afford housing*
 - 45% of renters spend over 30% of their income on shelter cost
- 13,726 households are on the housing waiting list**
- Close to 4,000 people use regionally owned shelters**

Rather than instituting policies that heighten the possibility of tenant evictions, we are asking Ontario to introduce changes to the law that support people's access to safe, secure and affordable homes. More specifically, we are asking the government to make the following changes to the Residential Tenancies Act:

1. Update the purpose of the Residential Tenancies Act to include improving public health in Ontario and recognizing the progressive realization of the human right to housing as preserved in the federal legislation.
2. Extend the current eviction suspension until the pandemic and the post-pandemic recovery period are over to ensure enough time for employment rates and other economic indicators to return to pre-COVID-19 levels. This is crucial to the health and wellbeing of residents who are living in precarious and uncertain situations.

*Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy Facts (2019)

** Region of Peel Housing Facts (2020)

3. Amend the RTA to provide direction to the LTB for mediated repayment agreements that are feasible and will not push tenants into homelessness or continued poverty.
4. Provide the LTB with direction on providing relief from eviction due to circumstances caused by the pandemic crisis. No one should face additional financial hardship or loss of housing because of job loss, health challenges or taking time off to look after children.
5. Re-institute effective rent control and alleviate the greatest source of anxiety for tenants even before this pandemic crisis – the unaffordable rents that increase year over year, displacing people from their homes and communities.
6. Ban eviction notices and create eviction prevention.

Tenants in Ontario need and deserve fair legislation, especially during a health crisis. On April 24, at the peak of the pandemic, Premier Ford acknowledged the anxiety faced by residential renters. As we go into our fourth month of Covid-19, tenants face possible evictions because of rent arrears or rent increases. Ontario must change course and truly commit to protecting tenants and their rights to safe affordable housing, which in turn will prevent an increase in poverty and homelessness.

Peel Alliance to End Homelessness (PAEH)

Peel Poverty Reduction Committee (PPRC)