



State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins
State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie
Albany, New York

September 22, 2020

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie,

As labor unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers across New York State, we are writing to urge you to support the [Emergency Housing Stability and Displacement Prevention Act \(S08667/A10827\)](#) sponsored by Senator Zellnor Myrie in the State Senate and Assemblywoman Karines Reyes in the State Assembly.

While the state legislature has taken some action to prevent evictions, we know that a crisis is still coming. At least 1.4 million New Yorkers have missed some months of rent. As of this writing, Court Officials have notified the state legislature that they will no longer be extending the eviction moratorium, and that, unless the legislature or the governor take action on or before October 1st, the floodgates will open.

The [Emergency Housing Stability and Displacement Prevention Act \(S08667/A10827\)](#) is the critical piece of action that is needed.

- It protects renters from eviction filings.
- It protects homeowners and landlords from foreclosure filings.
- It protects commercial tenants from facing eviction as well.

Being pro-worker emphatically means supporting all workers, their families, and their communities. Labor unions have a long history of fighting for equality for the most disparaged and oppressed members of society. We were active participants in the civil rights movement for racial equality in the 1960s, and countless union members participated in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Today, numerous labor organizations support the Black Lives Matter movement. This must include support of bold policy prescriptions from elected officials, and a commitment to fighting for equity in housing, healthcare, education, and numerous issues where Black community members are disproportionately impacted.

Evictions and foreclosure is one of these key issues. While the devastating impact of COVID-19 is inescapable, Black communities were hit the hardest. According to research from the Community Service Society, 51 percent of Black households are behind on their rent -- compared with just 6 percent of white households.

The moratorium implemented by the Centers for Disease Control does not do enough to protect tenants. It puts the onus on the tenant to assert it and without an attorney many tenants do not know what their rights are. It excludes thousands of tenants especially in parts of the state without rent regulation who face holdovers at the end of their lease terms, or in thirty days if they are month-to-month tenants.

Stable housing is intrinsically tied to better health outcomes, job stability, better educational outcomes, and many other necessities that humans need to survive. By the same token, as schools struggle to plan for remote learning, classroom learning, or a blended option -- stable housing is necessary. Without a stable home, students will be unable to learn and teachers will be unable to guide and teach.

That's why the undersigned labor unions **enthusiastically** support this bill sponsored by Senator Myrie and Assemblywoman Reyes to prevent evictions -- commercial and residential -- and foreclosures for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis plus one year.

We urge Albany to make a meaningful investment in Black workers, Black families, and all New Yorkers by passing these necessary bills. Housing is a human right, and these bills will enable New Yorkers to stay in their homes during one of the worst pandemics in human history, and to thrive as communities rebuild and recover.

Sincerely,

New York State Nurses Association

1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East

DC37 AFSCME

CWA District 1

UAW Region 9A

United Federation of Teachers

New York Hotel & Motel Trades Council,
AFL-CIO

Professional Staff Congress, AFT Local 2334

Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, UAW Local
2325

Legal Services Staff Association, NOLSW/UAW
2320

National Organization of Legal Services
Workers, UAW 2320

Freelancers Union

Local One IATSE, NYC Stagehands

AFM Local 802

