Landlords need assistance! The CDC eviction ban that started in September (not to mention the state-level eviction ban issued in March) has affected many landlords in an incredibly negative way. First, 86% of the landlords across the country only own 1 unit, and in Indiana 72% of all rental houses are owned by individual investors. Landlords cannot afford to have the income from their rentals taken away from them and still expect to survive.

The experiences of landlords that have tenants that have made partial rent payments since May abound. Basically, the tenant living in a rental unit for 6 months and paying for less than two of those months is not uncommon. Landlord must continue to pay the mortgage on the property, insurance, PROPERTY TAXES (double what a homeowner would pay), property management, maintain the property in a livable condition, AND reserve money for major repairs (eg roof, HVAC etc). Landlords not able to do this on less than 2 months’ rent over a 6-month time frame, with no guarantee of it ending on the sunset date. Landlords are running through their reserves at a staggering rate due to this non-payment of rent. Tenant are not attempting to make additional rent payments and will owe thousands of dollars that will not be able to collected without expensive legal action, if at all. Therefore, landlords are not only paying for their families to live, but also paying for their tenant’s family to live for free.

Most landlords are not in the position to continue this. Landlords are struggling to survive themselves, but their only options are to not pay their mortgage on their own home and leave their family homeless or not pay the mortgage on the rental and let the tenant deal with the bank as a new owner. In either situation, landlords stand to lose thousands of dollars. I know there are thousands of landlords in Indiana and millions across the country that are in this situation. It is apparent because at the last Sheriff sale in three counties in Indiana, 100% of the foreclosures are rental properties.

Additionally, people are afraid to rent their property out due to the eviction ban, so they are leaving them vacant or trying to fire-sale them. This obviously affects home values and availability of rental properties. Neither of which benefits anyone. There are plenty of landlords working with their tenants that are experiencing covid related financial issues, but there are also many tenants taking advantage of the situation.

Here are some recommendations to help landlords out of this terrible situation the CDC has created.

Lift the CDC ban right away.

* Create a national rental assistance program without any stipulations that the landlord has to follow.
* Require tenants to prove their hardship. This could easily be accomplished  by requiring tenants to be evaluated by HUD certified rental/homeowner counselors. The counselor could then issue a certificate that certifies the hardship and allows the landlord access to rental assistance funds for the period of the moratorium.
* Pay back the landlords for lost rent, late fees, attorney and eviction fees, and property damage that they have sustained since the Government shutdown back in April.

Yes... Tenants need assistance in these tough times. Especially since Governors acted on recommendations of the CDC to shut down their economies, throwing millions of people out of work. But, the moratorium on evictions is not the help they need. The moratorium is an easy way to make a government generated problem someone else's problem. We need you to step up and help make the burden of these draconian actions fairer to everyone.

Please consider the plight of the landlords in your decisions and future legislation.