



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Sustainability and Renters' Rights Committee

Agenda

Thursday, September 24, 2020

11:00 AM

Special Meeting

Remote Meeting. Call 253-215-8782; Meeting ID: 586 416 9164; or
Seattle Channel online.

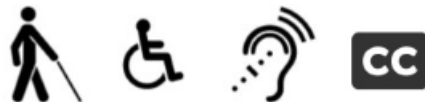
Kshama Sawant, Chair
Tammy J. Morales, Vice-Chair
Debora Juarez, Member
Andrew J. Lewis, Member
Alex Pedersen, Member
Teresa Mosqueda, Alternate

Chair Info: 206-684-8803; Kshama.Sawant@seattle.gov

[Watch Council Meetings Live](#) [View Past Council Meetings](#)

Council Chamber Listen Line: 206-684-8566

For accessibility information and for accommodation requests, please call
206-684-8888 (TTY Relay 7-1-1), email CouncilAgenda@Seattle.gov, or visit
<http://seattle.gov/cityclerk/accommodations>.



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Agenda
September 24, 2020 - 11:00 AM
Special Meeting

Meeting Location:

Remote Meeting. Call 253-215-8782; Meeting ID: 586 416 9164; or Seattle Channel online.

Committee Website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/sustainability-and-renters-rights>

This meeting also constitutes a meeting of the City Council, provided that the meeting shall be conducted as a committee meeting under the Council Rules and Procedures, and Council action shall be limited to committee business.

In-person attendance is currently prohibited per Washington State Governor's Proclamation No. 20-28.9, through October 1, 2020. Meeting participation is limited to access by telephone conference line and Seattle Channel online.

Register online to speak during the Public Comment period at the 11:00 a.m. Sustainability and Renters' Rights Committee meeting at <http://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/public-comment>.

Online registration to speak at the Sustainability and Renters' Rights Committee meeting will begin two hours before the 11:00 a.m. meeting start time, and registration will end at the conclusion of the Public Comment period during the meeting. Speakers must be registered in order to be recognized by the Chair.

Submit written comments to Councilmember Sawant at Kshama.Sawant@seattle.gov

Sign-up to provide Public Comment at <http://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/public-comment>

Watch live streaming video of the meeting at <http://www.seattle.gov/council/watch-council-live>

Listen to the meeting by calling the Council Chamber Listen Line at 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 586 416 9164

One Tap Mobile No. US: +12532158782,,5864169164#

Please Note: Times listed are estimated

A. Call To Order

B. Approval of the Agenda

C. Public Comment

D. Items of Business

1. Community Organizing Against Climate Change and the Financial Institutions that Fund Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

Supporting

Documents: [Addressing the Climate Crisis Presentation \(added; 9/24/20\)](#)

Briefing and Discussion (45 minutes)

Presenters: Rachel Heaton, Muckleshoot Tribe and Mazaska Talks; Sulakshana, Rainforest Action Network and Liberty Mutual Campaign; Jonathan Fikru, Climate Justice for Black Lives; Matt Remle, Lakota and Mazaska Talks; Jess Wallach, 350 Seattle

2. Strengthening Renters' Rights Under COVID Crisis and Supporting Grassroots Organizing to Cancel Rent, Mortgage, Utility Fees, and Late Payments

Supporting

Documents: [The COVID rental crisis and cancel rent movement - presentation \(added; 9/24/20\)](#)

Briefing and Discussion (45 minutes)

E. Adjournment



Legislation Text

File #: Inf 1690, **Version:** 1

Addressing the Climate Crisis: Local and National Organizing

Rachel Heaton (Mazaska Talks)

Sulakshana (Rainforest Action Network)

Jonathan Fikru (Climate Justice for Black Lives)

Matt Remle (Mazaska Talks)

Jess Wallach (350 Seattle)

<https://stopthemoneypipeline.com>

RSVP for our Stop Funding Tar Sands digital Rally on Friday, October 2nd **TAKE ACTION**

STOP ~~THE~~ MONEY PIPELINE



**WALL STREET IS FINANCING
CLIMATE DESTRUCTION**

<https://mazaskataalks.org/#theboycott>

**MAZASKA TALKS
(MONEY TALKS)**

THE BOYCOTT

THE PIPELINES

THE BANKS

DIVEST YOURSELF

DIVEST YOUR COMMUNITY

DIVEST THE GLOBE (10.23 - 10.25)

NEWS

ABOUT

CONTACT

THE BOYCOTT

Put your money where your solidarity is.





Green New Deal Budget Funding

1. Funding assistance/support for electrification of homes & buildings to get off of oil/gas and go to 100% renewables.
2. Funding assistance/support for weatherization of homes & buildings.
3. Staffing for GND oversight board.
4. Stipends for low-income/youth participation in GND oversight board.
5. Just transition worker program funding for current oil/gas workers to green economy jobs.
6. Tree canopy, tree planting in south end, downtown to bring to equal tree canopy as rest of Seattle.

Licton Springs Cultural Signage and Restoration

Last winter, we got the city to designate Licton Springs as a historic site under historic preservation. We would like to work with the Mickle shoot tribe's cultural department to bring cultural signage to the park.

The Licton Springs committee council has a vegetation plan to remove invasive species and bring back native vegetation to the sacred site.

Duwamish Longhouse Crosswalk

The Duwamish longhouse on West Marginal way has been asking for assistance to have a crosswalk placed from their longhouse to the park/parking lot across the street.

Healthy Homes Healthy Buildings Ordinance

Ban gas or oil hookups as new homes and other buildings are developed.



WA State Public Bank Budget Plan

We are working with Sen Hasegawa's on State Public Bank plan. He has stated any support from city councilmembers greatly helps in Olympia. If a State Bank is established past councilmembers have stated that Seattle would shift its depository services from Wells Fargo to the public bank.



Legislation Text

File #: Inf 1636, **Version:** 1

Strengthening Renters' Rights Under COVID Crisis and Supporting Grassroots Organizing to Cancel Rent, Mortgage, Utility Fees, and Late Payments

The Pandemic, Recession, and the Movement to Cancel Rents, Mortgages, Utility Fees, and Late Payments



Photo: Toby Scott via Getty Images

*Seattle City Council
Sustainability and Renters'
Rights Committee*

*Councilmember Kshama
Sawant, Chair*

September 24, 2020



Nationally, before COVID: 78% of US workers live paycheck-to-paycheck to make ends meet

- **More than half** of minimum wage workers say they have to work more than one job to make ends meet
- **Nearly 3 in 4 workers** say they are in debt today - more than half think they will always be
- **Nearly 3 in 5 renters** could not come up with \$400 in an emergency

<http://press.careerbuilder.com/2017-08-24-Living-Paycheck-to-Paycheck-is-a-Way-of-Life-for-Majority-of-U-S-Workers-According-to-New-CareerBuilder-Survey>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/05/cancel-rent/611059/>

Seattle, before COVID: Nearly half of renters are officially rent-burdened

- ***2010-2018: Average rents in Seattle rose 69%, 2X the national average***
- ***December 2019: Average rent in Seattle was \$2,024/month***
 - ***A household would need an income greater than \$81,000/year to avoid being rent-burdened***
- ***More than half of Seattle renters hit with eviction notices owed one month's rent or less***
- ***Nearly 9 out of every 10 tenants who are evicted wind up homeless***
- ***Evictions fall disproportionately on women and people of color***

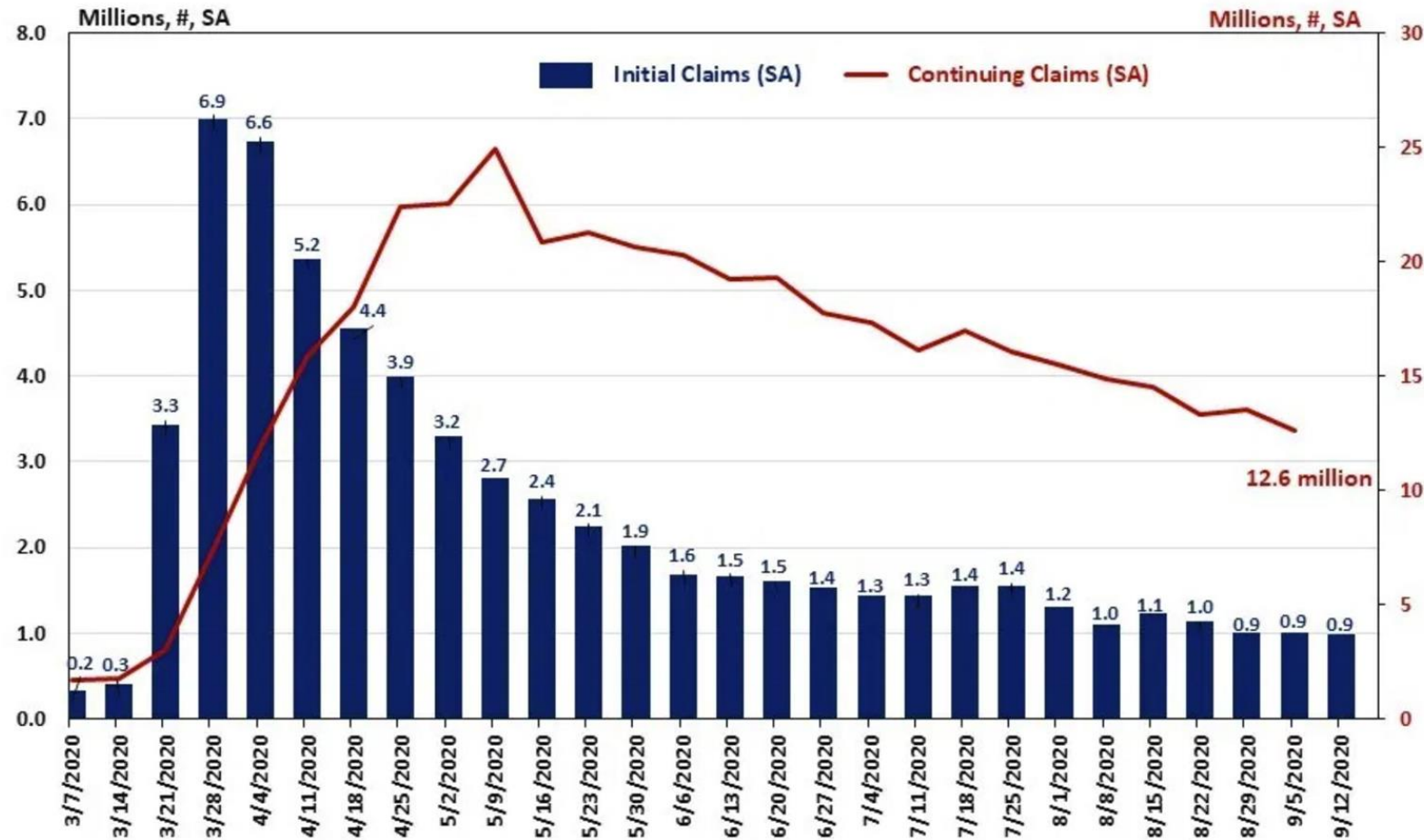
<https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/hoping-for-seattle-area-rents-to-get-cheap-dont-hold-your-breath/>

<https://seattle.curbed.com/2018/6/25/17501872/seattle-area-housing-cost-burden>

<https://www.rentjungle.com/average-rent-in-seattle-rent-trends/>

http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SeattleWomensCommission/LosingHome_9-18-18.pdf

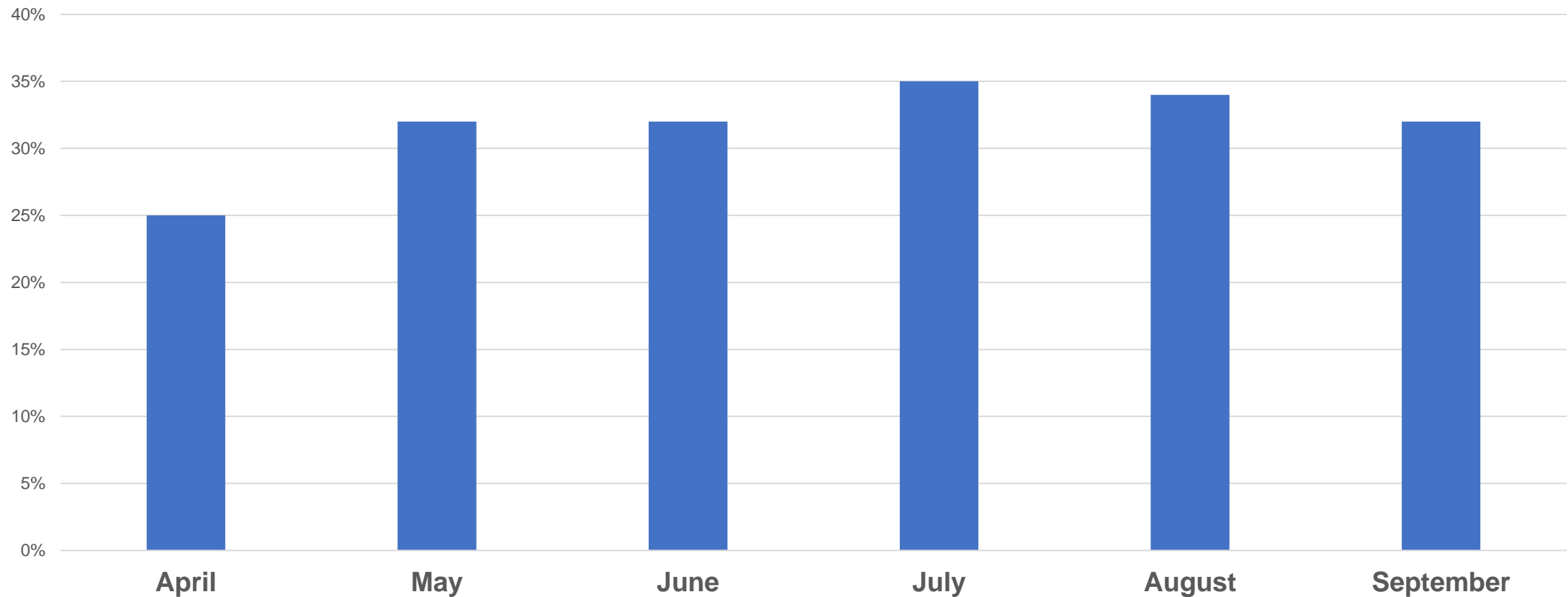
Record COVID unemployment is leveling off at a staggering 1 million new claims/week



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

Around 1/3 of US renters are unable to pay rent on time

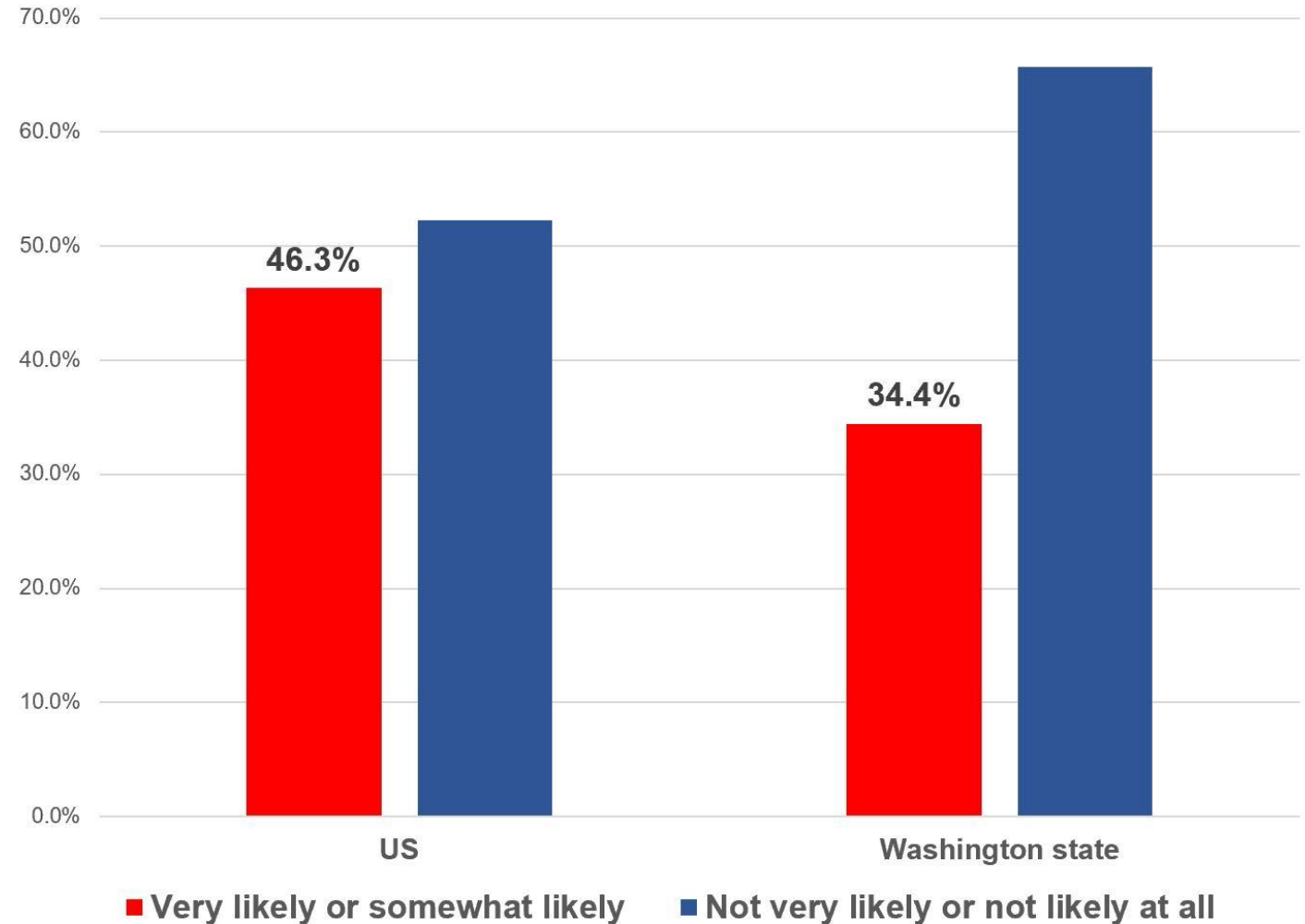
Percentage of US renters unable to pay rent on time during COVID crisis



**Housing
insecurity is
high, even
where
eviction
moratoriums
are in place**

US Census
<https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/household-pulse-survey.html>

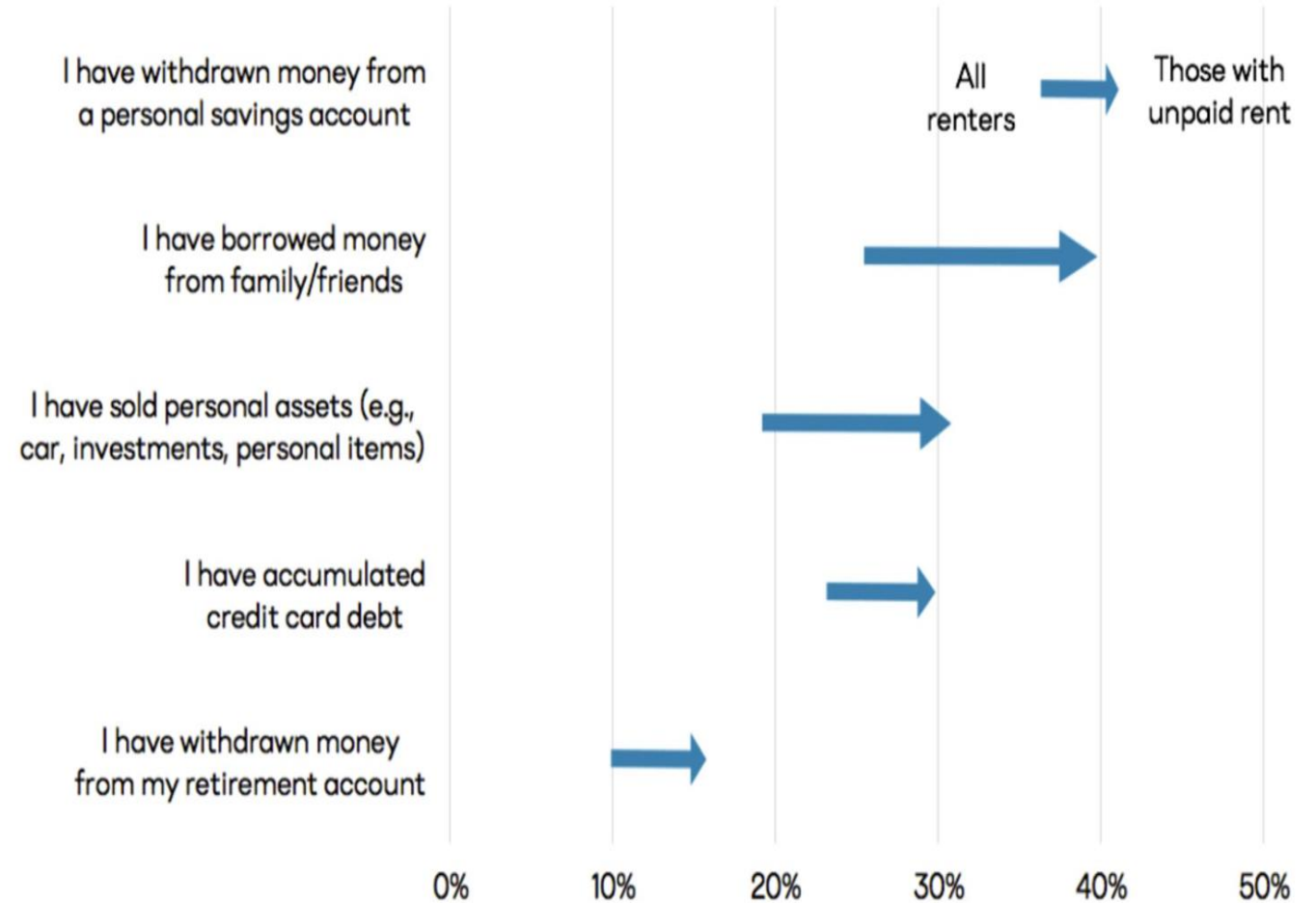
Nearly half of US renters, and 1/3 of Washington state renters, say it's very likely or somewhat likely they will be evicted in the next two months



**To pay
landlords,
renters are
spending
their meager
savings,
taking on new
debt, and
borrowing
money**

Many are making financial sacrifices to keep up with rent payments

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which of the following are true?



Source: Apartment List Survey Data

Apartment  List

ApartmentList.com Survey Data -

<https://www.apartmentlist.com/research/september-housing-payments>

Tara Raghuveer, director of the KC Tenants, Kansas City, Missouri, and national Homes Guarantee campaign:

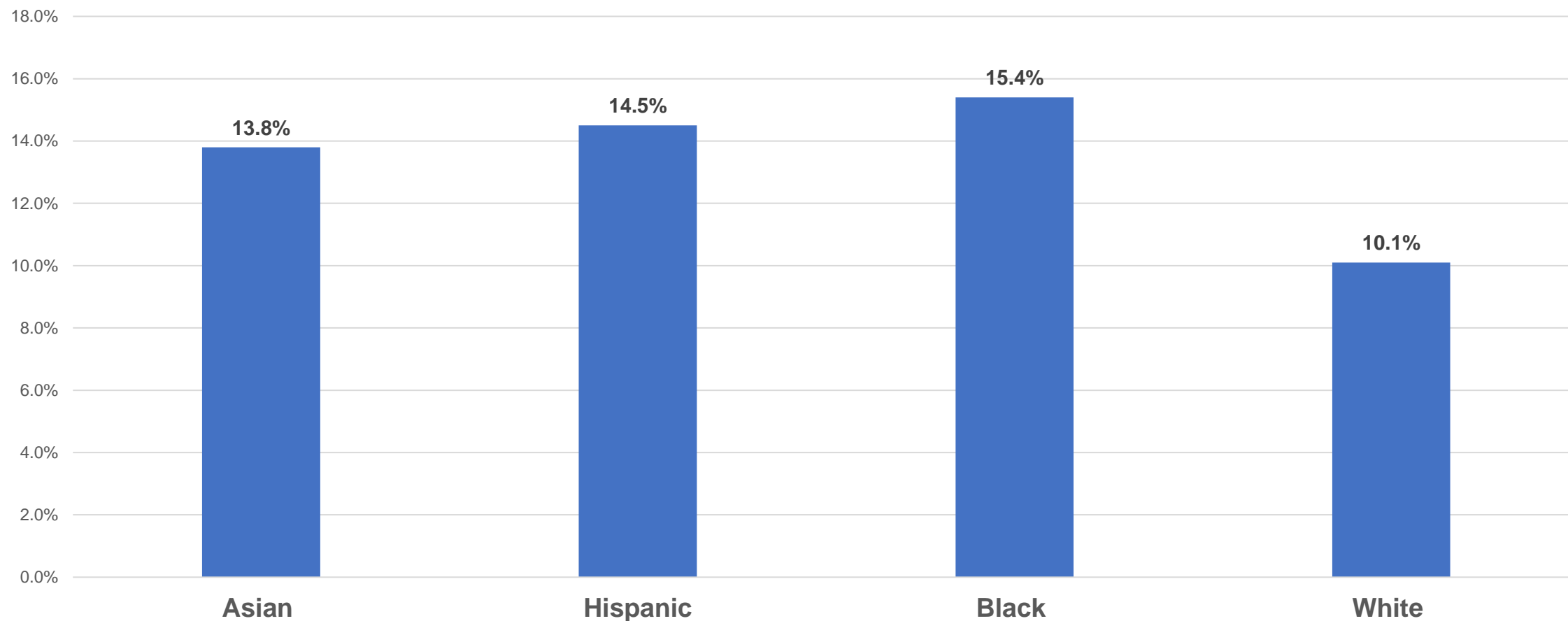
*‘People are being forced into the streets, into their cars, forced to double up. **Every eviction is an act of violence**, always, but especially during a pandemic.*

Every time we’re allowing an eviction to occur, we’re putting a landlord’s profits above people’s lives.’

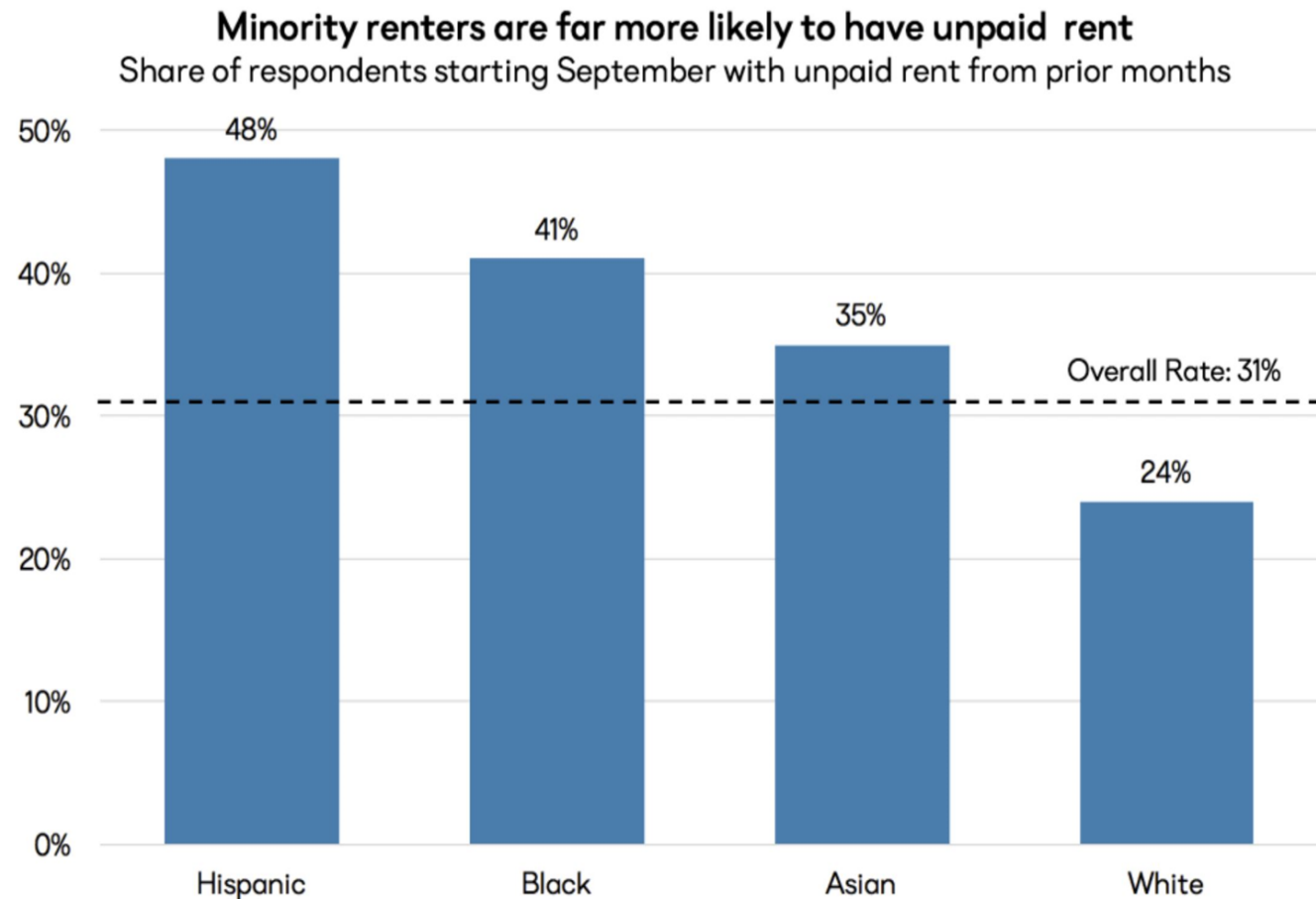


The COVID unemployment crisis is harming communities of color disproportionately

June 2020 unemployment rates



**The growing rent
debt crisis is
disproportionately
harming
communities of
color**

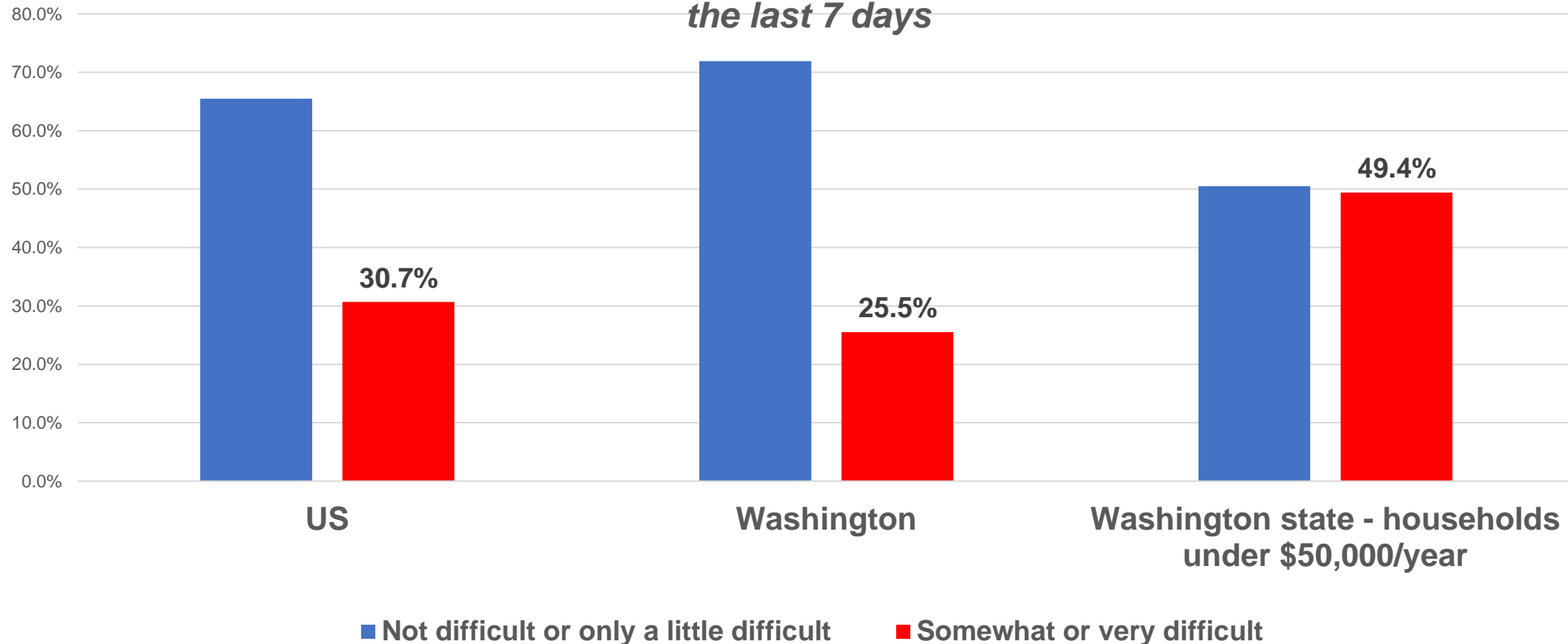


ApartmentList.com Survey Data -

<https://www.apartmentlist.com/research/september-housing-payments>

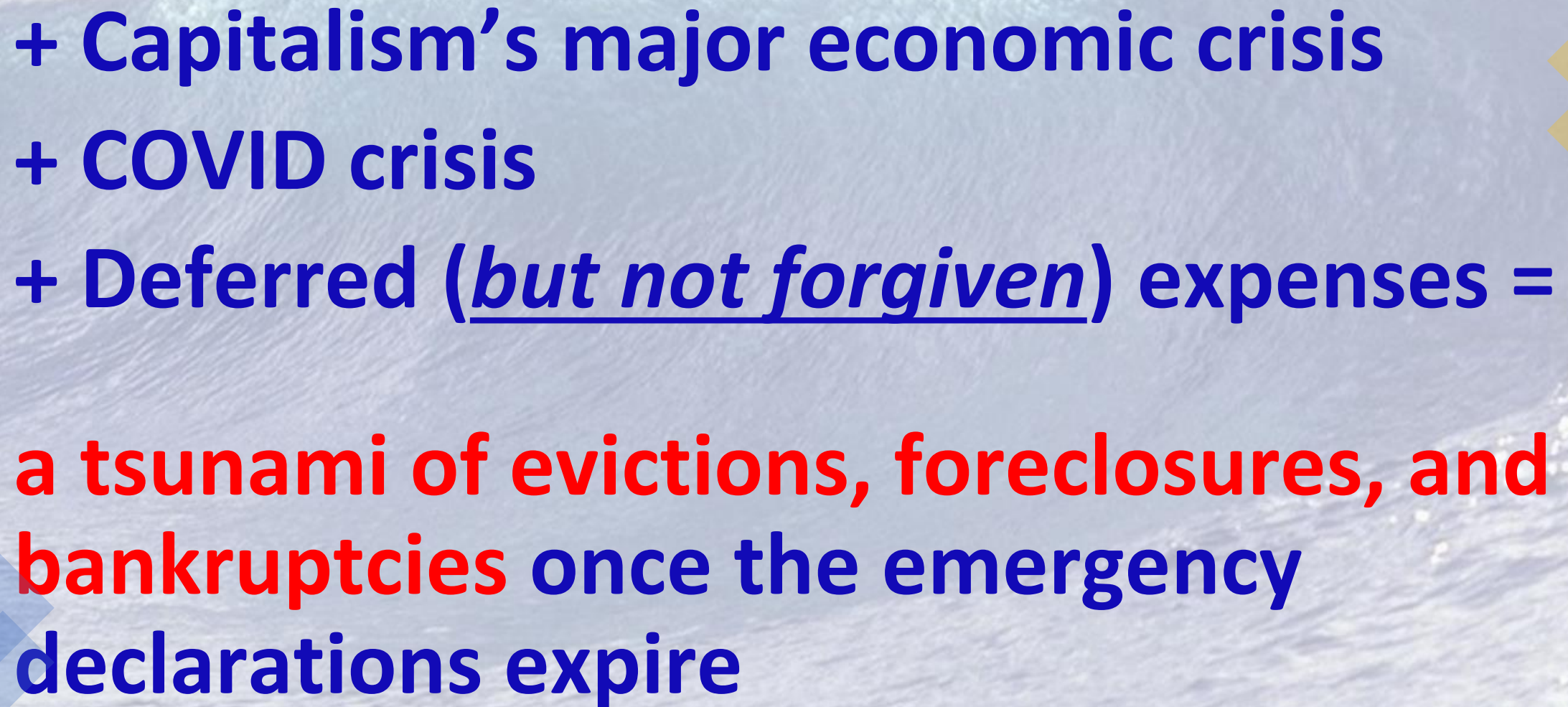
Working-class households are struggling to keep up with basic expenses

Households reporting difficulty paying for usual household expenses in the last 7 days



US Census

<https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/household-pulse-survey.html>



- + Capitalism's major economic crisis
- + COVID crisis
- + Deferred (*but not forgiven*) expenses =

a tsunami of evictions, foreclosures, and bankruptcies once the emergency declarations expire

The national tsunami



The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis: an Estimated 30-40 Million People in America Are at Risk

AUGUST 7, 2020 • EMILY BENFER, DAVID BLOOM ROBINSON, STACY

BUTLER, LAVAR EDMONDS, SAM GILMAN, KATHERINE LUCAS

MCKAY, ZACH NEUMANN, LISA OWENS, NEIL STEINKAMP & DIANE YENTEL

The United States may be facing the most severe housing crisis in its history. According to the latest analysis of weekly US Census data, as federal, state, and local protections and resources expire and in the absence of robust and swift intervention, **an estimated 30–40 million people in America could be at risk of eviction in the next several months.** Many property owners, who lack the credit or financial ability to cover rental payment arrears, will struggle to pay their mortgages and property taxes and maintain properties. The COVID-19 housing crisis has sharply increased the risk of foreclosure and bankruptcy, especially among small property owners; long-term harm to renter families and individuals; disruption of the affordable housing market; and destabilization of communities across the United States.

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/the-covid-19-eviction-crisis-an-estimated-30-40-million-people-in-america-are-at-risk/>

The Washington state tsunami



- **649,000 – 789,000 households at risk of eviction once emergency measures expire.**
- **That's 26–34% of all renter households**

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/the-covid-19-eviction-crisis-an-estimated-30-40-million-people-in-america-are-at-risk/>

The rent and mortgage moratoriums that our movement won are important stopgap measures - but they will not solve the mounting debt crisis that renters and working class homeowners face

Kathryn, Central District:

- ***“A freeze in evictions means nothing if people are faced with 2-18 months of back rent to pay at the end of this crisis. You think homelessness in seattle is bad NOW?”***

Kurt from Tacoma:

- ***“Even with a moratorium on evictions, allowing rent debt to accrue during this disaster will ensure that our residents will be economically destabilized far beyond the time period of the work shutdown. We need to do everything we can to minimize upheaval until the illness and its direct impacts can be brought under control.”***



**State/national movement to cancel
all rent, mortgages, utilities, late
fees, and housing debt**

- ✓ **Cover all residential renters who have suffered economically during the COVID crisis.**
- ✓ **Suspend mortgage payments for homeowners, small landlords (those who are “natural persons” i.e. not corporations), and affordable housing providers who have suffered economically during the COVID crisis.**

Tenants have organized, fought back, and won!

NEWS

Seattle City Council votes to limit winter evictions

[Local News](#) | [Local Politics](#) | [Real Estate](#)

Landlords blocked from raising rents on Seattle apartments with safety violations

Originally published June 6, 2016 at 6:54 pm | Updated June 7, 2016 at 10:40 am

Sawant Hails Tenants' Win: Fighting Displacement & Securing Affordable Housing in Central District

"Residents of the Chateau Apartments & the tenants' movement strike blow against gentrification. displacement"

Tenants Win Limits on Move-In Fees – Legislation Passes 8-0!

On December 12, after nearly a 1/2 year of struggle by Washington CAN and tenants' rights advocates, the Seattle City Council passed our move-in fees legislation, 8-0! My remarks motivating the council bill below.

Kshama Sawant  @cmkshama · Apr 10, 2019

Kenton Apartment residents on Capitol Hill organized as [@MilestoneTenant](#), fought back, & forced their corporate landlord to rescind an outrageous rent increase. It shows how can build renter power against the for-profit housing market! It also shows Seattle needs [#RentControl](#)!



Community panel

- **What are you, your neighbors, and your co-workers experiencing during this COVID crisis?**
- **What must Seattle City Council and state government do to protect tenants from the eviction tsunami?**



*Seattle City Council Sustainability and Renters' Rights Committee
Councilmember Kshama Sawant, Chair*