



Legislation Text

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CITY OF SEATTLE

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION urging Mayor Durkan and Governor Inslee to extend the City and State emergency moratoriums on evictions through no earlier than the end of 2021.

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, the Washington Governor issued Proclamation 20-05, proclaiming a state of emergency for all counties throughout the state of Washington in response to new cases of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 3, 2020, Mayor Jenny A. Durkan proclaimed a civil emergency in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, on March 5, 2020, the Council adopted Resolution 31937 affirming the civil emergency, modifying orders transmitted by the Mayor related to the emergency, and establishing Council's expectations related to future orders and reporting by the Mayor during the civil emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020, the Washington Governor issued Proclamation 20-19, to temporarily prohibit residential evictions statewide until April 17, 2020, and has subsequently amended the prohibition on residential evictions statewide, currently in place through June 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on April 22, 2021, the Washington Governor signed into law Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5160, which states that "[t]he eviction moratorium instituted by the governor of the state of Washington's proclamation 20-19.6 shall end on June 30, 2021"; and

WHEREAS, there is nothing in ESSB 5160 or in other legislation preventing the Washington Governor from issuing a proclamation declaring a new eviction moratorium after June 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020, as a result of the continued worldwide spread of COVID-19, its significant progression in Seattle, and the high risk it poses to the most vulnerable populations, Mayor Durkan

issued an emergency order imposing an eviction moratorium, subsequently extended, and currently in place until June 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Durkan’s March 14 emergency order states that, “[t]he decision to extend the moratorium shall be evaluated and determined by the Mayor based on public health necessity”; and

WHEREAS, a grassroots movement of community organizations and renters, including thousands signing petitions, fought for the Seattle and Washington State eviction moratoriums to be initially issued and later to be extended; and

WHEREAS, the affordable housing crisis, homelessness emergency, and now the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic and unemployment emergencies in Seattle are having a deep impact on the lives of people throughout Seattle and the region, disproportionately on people of color, immigrants, the LGBTQ community, indigenous peoples’ communities, disabled community members, and women, who already struggle against entrenched inequality; and

WHEREAS, although Black people constitute only 8.3 percent of the city’s population, they constituted fully 28 percent of all tenants facing eviction in 2019, according to the Housing Justice Project; and

WHEREAS, the September 2018, Seattle Women’s Commission and the King County Bar Association’s report Losing Home: The Human Cost of Eviction in Seattle (“Losing Home”) found that of people evicted “31.2% were Black tenants, experiencing eviction at a rate 4.5 times what would be expected based on their demographics in Seattle”; and

WHEREAS, Losing Home found that most evicted respondents became homeless, with 37.5 percent completely unsheltered, 25.0 percent living in a shelter or transitional housing, and 25.0 percent staying with family or friends. Only 12.5 percent of evicted respondents found another apartment or home to move into; and

WHEREAS, a 2018 investigation by the King County Medical Examiner’s Office found that over half of 107 presumed homeless deaths investigated occurred outside and attributed approximately 121, or 62

percent, of presumed homeless deaths investigated to non-natural causes (drug overdose, accidents (including hypothermia), suicide, homicide, and undetermined), making it clear that people experiencing homelessness have a much higher risk than the general population of developing exposure-related conditions; and

WHEREAS, persons with underlying health conditions are at greater risk of fatality if they catch COVID-19, and preventing individuals from becoming higher-risk patients will protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the region; and

WHEREAS, a January 2021 study titled “Housing Precarity & the COVID-19 Pandemic: Impacts of Utility Disconnection and Eviction Moratoria on Infections and Deaths Across US Counties,” published by the National Bureau of Economic Research, found that, “policies that limit evictions are found to reduce COVID-19 infections by 3.8% and reduce deaths by 11%,” and that, “[h]ad such policies been in place across all counties (i.e., adopted as federal policy) from early March 2020 through the end of November 2020, our estimated counterfactuals show that policies that limit evictions could have reduced COVID-19 infections by 14.2% and deaths by 40.7%”; and

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2021, *The Stranger* published an op-ed demanding the eviction moratoriums be extended through the end of 2021, co-signed by 18 community leaders, including tenant rights advocates, labor leaders, environmental activists, civil rights, and youth leaders and a Seattle City Councilmember; and

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2021, 47 unions, tenant advocates, immigrant rights groups, and other organizations sent an open letter to Mayor Durkan stating, “we are writing to urge you to extend Seattle’s eviction moratorium for residents, small businesses, and nonprofits beyond its current expiration date of March 31, 2021. We ask that it be extended through the end of this year, and that you announce this extension as soon as possible”; and

WHEREAS, on May 17, 2021, the Washington Community Action Network began a letter writing campaign to

Governor Inslee stating, “[w]e are calling for an extension of the Eviction Moratorium through the end of the year to make sure renters have time to access rent relief programs, get back to their normal incomes, and can get caught up on rent. We won some important policies in the state legislature, but to make sure those policies are effective, we need to ensure renters have time to catch up on rent”; and

WHEREAS, on May 27, 2021, the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance began a letter writing campaign to Governor Inslee stating that, “incredible numbers of renters are applying for rental assistance and it will take months to get the funds distributed. Lifting the moratorium and allowing landlords to proceed with evictions a month from now would be grossly irresponsible”; and

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau published the Household Pulse Survey, which found that 270,000 Washington State renters have no or little confidence they will be able to pay rent next month (18 percent of all state renters), and 98,000 Washington State renters think it is very or somewhat likely they will be evicted in the next two months; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE THAT:

Section 1. The Seattle City Council urges Washington Governor Jay Inslee to issue a new proclamation, substantively similar to Proclamation 20-19, to establish a statewide moratorium on residential evictions through no earlier than the end of 2021, and to make that announcement as soon as possible. The Seattle City Council requests the Office of Intergovernmental Relations convey the content of this resolution to the Office of the Governor.

Section 2. The Seattle City Council urges Mayor Jenny Durkan to extend the March 14, 2020, emergency order placing a moratorium on residential and small business evictions through no earlier than the end of 2021. The Seattle City Council further urges Mayor Durkan to make the announcement of the moratorium extension as soon as possible.

Adopted by the City Council the _____ day of _____, 2021, and signed by

me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2021.

President _____ of the City Council

Filed by me this _____ day of _____, 2021.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)