



May 5, 2020

Hon. Judge Kim Berkeley Clark  
437 Grant Street, #330  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Hon. Judge Christine Ward  
819 City-County Building  
414 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

To the Honorable Judge Kim Berkeley Clark and the Honorable Judge Christine Ward:

We, the below signed, represent Allegheny County-based landlords, tenant advocates, nonprofits, and elected officials. We collectively are asking you to use the discretion allotted to you by Order No. 531 of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania during the declared Judicial Emergency to extend the moratorium on eviction filings involving non-payment of rent and execution of orders for possession until June 1, 2020.

Currently, an unprecedented stream of federal funding is being allocated to address and intervene in the potential eviction crisis this County will face once the moratorium is lifted. The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County Economic Development Department have issued or will issue Requests for Proposals for the allocation of these funds for rental assistance programs. Currently, the earliest due date for a response to these RFPs is Monday, May 18, 2020. Millions of dollars are being prepared to intervene in this crisis - but this money will not be available by the end of the current moratorium. Additionally, the County and City have acknowledged the shortfalls in the existing infrastructure as it relates to rental assistance, especially in light of the increased need during the COVID-19 crisis. Only four nonprofits are currently set up and approved to distribute rental assistance. This number will be increasing in the coming month, but the URA does not expect these additional funding agencies to be in place and ready until at least mid-June of this year.

The Federal CARES Act includes a moratorium on evictions for failure to pay rent for federally assisted properties for 120 days after the implementation of the Act. This means that for a large percentage of the rental stock in Allegheny County, a moratorium is in place until at least July 25, 2020. There is a need for education to tenants, landlords, attorneys, and the Courts on what this means and how it will be known whether or not a certain property is impacted by this. There currently does not exist a judicial

infrastructure to track this and more time is needed for the impacted gatekeepers to educate themselves and others.

There does exist a legitimate concern for “mom and pop” and nonprofit landlords. These landlords will benefit greatly from the rental assistance programs being launched this month, which they may not realize will exist. Additionally, they have potential access to certain loan programs, including the new CARES Act SBA loans (EIDL and/or PPP), Pennsylvania’s Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and other small business grants being issued by entities around the County, to include Facebook and the County. Our organizations and offices are actively working to educate small and nonprofit landlords on these programs.

It is clear to us, representatives of the parties most impacted by the eviction moratorium, that more time is needed as programs are implemented, money is put into place, and education occurs. We ask that you use your discretion to extend the County-wide eviction moratorium for failure to pay rent and end of lease term until the current end of the Judicial Emergency - June 1, 2020.

If any of us can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Rafanan Kennedy  
Pittsburgh United

Larry Swanson  
ACTION-Housing, Inc.

Robert V. Racunas  
Neighborhood Legal Services

John Katz  
Brandywine Communities

Megan Stanley  
Pittsburgh Commission  
on Human Relations

Rep. Frank Dermody  
Rep. Sara Innamorato  
Rep. Summer Lee  
Rep. Dan Miller

Senator Jay Costa  
Senator Lindsey Williams  
Senator Wayne Fontana  
Senator Pam Iovino

Rep. Dan Frankel  
Rep. Adam Ravenstahl  
Rep. Austin Davis  
Rep. Jake Wheatley  
Rep. Ed Gainey  
Rep. Dan Deasy

Mark Schwartz  
Regional Housing Legal Services

Councilperson Bethany Hallam  
Councilperson Olivia Bennett  
Councilperson Paul Klein  
Councilperson Anita Prizio

Joshua Pollard  
Omicelo

Ciora Thomas  
SisTers PGH

Pittsburgh Union of Regional Renters

Carol Hardeman  
Hill District Consensus Group

Brandi Fisher  
Alliance for Police Accountability

Juan Garret  
Riverside Center for Innovation

Scott Wolovich & Kacy McGill  
New Sun Rising & Pittsburgh Restaurant  
Workers Aid

Aaron Sukenik  
Hilltop Alliance

Mike Skirpan  
Community Forge

Aweys Mwaliya  
Somali Bantu Community Association

Malik Bankston  
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Christina Howell  
Bloomfield Development Corporation,

Sonya Tilghman  
Hazelwood Initiative, Inc

Kevin Quisenberry  
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Shad Henderson  
Neighborhood Allies

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Pittsburgh for CEDAW

Penn Plaza Support and Action Coalition

Laura Wiens  
Pittsburghers for Public Transit

Dave Breingan  
Lawrenceville United

Lucille E. Dabney  
Program to Aid Citizen Enterprise

Jackie Smith  
Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance

Michelle Chenn  
Axiom Advancement Corp.