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## LEGISLATURE READIES KNOCKOUT PUNCH TO SMALL LANDLORDS

After over ten months of pandemic related hardship being imposed on mom and pop landlords the Illinois legislature is considering legislation that will push those struggling businesses over the edge.

The Illinois Rental Property Owners Association (IRPOA) opposes SB3066-HFA4. This legislation is being rushed through the lame duck session.

This bill would:

- Extend the eviction moratorium until September of 2021,
- Seal eviction records for 2 ½ years, including concealing criminal behavior from future landlords
- Allow tenants to falsely claim they can't pay rent making them eligible for rental assistance,
- Impair a landlord's ability to enforce their lease even after the pandemic is over,
- Protect couples earning as much as \$198,000 from eviction even though high income households are not eligible for rental assistance.
- Penalize landlords for accepting a partial payment of rent due,
- Protects tenants from consequences for failure to pay rent, including preventing eviction, concealing the default from creditors, and paying off the tenant debt, but only delays the foreclosure of the owner's property. Property owners are still expected to pay taxes, utility bills and maintenance costs during the pandemic.

This proposal is an unnecessarily complex government program designed to address a straightforward crises. Specifically, there are people who are suffering financial hardship due to the pandemic. The solution is to identify legitimate COVID related hardships, protect those people from eviction, and get them the financial support they need.

We advocate that courts are best suited to address this crisis. Judges should be responsible to determine when the claim of a COVID related hardship is legitimate and given the discretion to seal eviction records where the hardship of COVID-19 is supported by evidence. Additionally, we ask that our power to eject residents who are disrupting the neighborhood, or damaging property, be returned to us.

Our members have been and will continue to work to ensure that individuals affected by COVID-19 are given every opportunity to remain in their home. We have been waiving late fees, offering payment plans, and directing tenants to resources for rental assistance. But we need access to the courts for those tenants who are violating leases in ways unrelated to COVID-19.

Small mom-and-pop landlords, who make up the majority of IRPOA members, have had their interests marginalized by the State of Illinois. They are not in a position to absorb the losses that the eviction moratorium imposes. The majority of rental housing in Illinois is provided by average working-class people who own a handful of rentals and rely on the monthly rent to meet their own obligations. Mom-and-pop landlords cannot go without income for over a year and a half.

We encourage housing providers from across Illinois to join us in this fight. We ask all housing providers to add your voices to the growing number of small businesses who are speaking out about being unfairly burdened by the State's response to COVID-19.

Established in 1994, the Illinois Rental Property Owners Association is an alliance of a dozen independent rental property owner associations across the State of Illinois. IRPOA advocates for laws and ordinances that are in the best interests of both our members and the residents we serve.

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