

From: Rob Perry
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2021 8:56 AM
To: Tom Stevens
Cc: Amy Kimmel
Subject: Housing committee testimony

Dear Representative Stevens:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee. As you know, Amy and I strongly believe it is time for the moratorium to end. I focused on the situation with Covid cases, vaccinations, and where we compare with the nation. Vermont is past a state of emergency, though our governor does not seem to realize it. Today, Vermont will exceed 50% in at least one dose of vaccination. The vulnerable populations are vaccinated. Vermonters over 65 are up in the 70% vaccinated. The governor is opening up many parts of the state yet continues to hobble rental property owners by continuing the state of emergency and pushing responsibility to end the moratorium to the legislature.

I'm sure you agree the testimony before the committee was heartbreaking. Property owners are unfairly suffering and in some cases suffering greatly. The Governor won't act, but you can. You can change your moratorium instead of waiting for him. Godot never does come. While the committee listened and understood the harm being done today by your legislation, I was disheartened by the seeming lack of urgency. This is a crisis for some people, and no longer a crisis for those supposedly protected. The time to act is now. Please either repeal the moratorium, or simply add the very important exceptions. Repeal is preferred since there is really no justification today for maintaining it, and the costs to landlords and to tenants is growing. A new housing crisis looms, one created by the legislature.

While we're on housing crises, Question 5 in Burlington I believe will come to you. It is exactly the wrong approach to addressing housing shortages. It will – with certainty, not my opinion – raise rents and reduce the supply of housing. Mom and pop landlords like me and Amy will leave the business or sell our property to larger rental owners or even sell as condos. Aside from these very real impacts, this is an affront to our property rights – is the converse of the regulation also true? Can we force a good tenant to stay in our property FOREVER. I guess that is as unfair as forcing property owners to house people forever but somehow tenants get far more rights than property owners. Do you really have to wonder why there's a shortage of rental housing?

Best regards,

Rob Perry