



April 6, 2020

The Honorable Cheri Beasley
Chief Justice of North Carolina Superior Court
Post Office Box 1841
Raleigh NC 27602

Dear Chief Justice Beasley,

Housing providers throughout the state are taking unprecedented measures to support residents financially impacted by COVID 19 offering solutions such as rent deferment, developing payment plans and waiving late fees. However, there are some tenants who are exploiting these efforts and exacerbating the effects of this crisis exponentially. Recently, campaigns urging residents not to pay rent even if they are capable have begun circulating throughout the nation and even in North Carolina.

Your decisive action to close North Carolina Courts to help reduce the infectious spread of COVID-19 were measured and addressed the severity of the global pandemic that had reached our state. While we applaud your efforts, we fear the public does fully not understand this directive.

Many understand they cannot be evicted for nonpayment but, either from lack of knowledge or flagrant negligence, they falsely believe they will not owe the rent during this time. This will lead to more people being evicted when their rent is due post-crisis. For an example of the misinformation, please see the attached letter to neighbors passed out at an apartment complex in Raleigh.

To help us educate the public, we ask you to please consider supporting landlords' efforts to work with tenants who have been impacted and encourage North Carolinians who have not been financially impacted by COVID 19 and can pay their rent or mortgage to do so. Chief Justice Beatty of South Carolina recently wrote a memo to this effect and we believe similar messaging could go a long way towards helping tenants and landlords in the state of North Carolina

Additionally, with the extensions of court closures, we are asking that certain evictions are still able to be conducted under emergency proceedings, in instances where criminal activity and/or tenant safety is jeopardized. As closure of the courts is the basis for renter's strikes, we fear it is only a matter of time before bad actors to assume there will be no possible recourse during this moratorium.

Our members take pride in being housing providers and pledge to continue to work with residents throughout the COVID 19 pandemic. We recognize that many who are without work are delayed in their ability to pay for housing through no fault of their own. We are relying on residents not financially impacted by COVID 19 to help diminish the effects of the payment shortages we are anticipating. This hardship will be passed on to housing providers and could have devastating implications for the housing industry if their mortgages also suffer greater losses unnecessarily because of abuse.

Renter strikes are unnecessary and damaging to entire communities diminishing the ability of housing providers to accommodate residents who cannot pay. Amid a health and financial crisis, we cannot afford a housing crisis that will impact our most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact our government affairs teams, Janae Moore, Government Affairs Director for the Apartment Association of North Carolina at Janae@aanconline.org, or Mark Zimmerman, Senior Vice President of External Affairs for NC REALTORS® at MZimmerman@ncrealtors.org.

Sincerely,

Sherry Yarborough

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