

FACT SHEET



Support: Secure Housing for All Virginians During COVID-19

HB 5111- Joshua Cole
SB 5051- Ghazala Hashmi

Problem: Since the end of Virginia's eviction moratorium on June 22, until the implementation of the current moratorium on August 10, 4,131 families lost their homes. The latest eviction moratorium will end on September 7. In the next eight weeks, 7,052 eviction hearings are scheduled across Virginia. The RVA Eviction Lab estimates that 262,000 households are at risk of eviction. 28% of renters have little to no confidence in making the next month's rent. On average, tenants facing eviction during the pandemic owe more than \$2,000 in back rent.

Policy solution:

Virginia can prevent a mass eviction crisis by enacting eviction protections with a more substantial timeline. Month-by-month protections have been crucial in keeping individuals housed, but even a one-month lapse in protections has dire effects on thousands of Virginia's families. As well as more robust safeguards, households need rent relief. As of August 12, 2020, The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that to assist Virginia households through the pandemic will require around 2.7 billion dollars in rent relief until June of next year. The current ask of 1 billion until the end of 2020 is a modest policy solution to keep the most cost-burdened of Virginians housed.

Why Are Protections Important?

- **Public Safety:**
Amid a public health pandemic, it is in the interest of public safety to keep families and individuals housed. The ability to quarantine, engage in frequent hand washing and other

hygiene protocols to stop the spread of COVID-19 are all related to secure housing. Congregate facilities (facilities such as nursing homes, detention centers, prisons) have been some of the hardest hit with COVID outbreaks. Although Virginia's homeless services providers are doing an incredible job in COVID prevention, an uptick in those needing shelter would put an extensive burden on providers.

- **Equity:**
Black and LatinX Virginians are suffering from disproportionate rates of evictions. The multi-pandemics facing our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities must be addressed with equitable policies for eviction prevention.

Can Virginia Afford It?

- **Funding:**
The Governor dedicated \$50 million in federal CARES Act money in June to assist families facing eviction. He is also proposing a further \$88 million in state funding to help combat evictions. Many advocates are calling on the Commonwealth to use 'rainy day' funds to ensure essential budget priorities can be addressed- including eviction prevention.

Keep Virginians Housed!

We must call on our officials to act during special session to create a Commonwealth that prioritizes the needs of Virginia's families in this critical hour.

Sources: RVA Eviction Lab, LAJC Eviction Tracker, National Low Income Housing Coalition, The Virginia Department of Health, The Commonwealth Institute