Legislation Text

File #: 200129, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and the Homeless to hold public hearings on the enforcement of, and the expansion of protections for renters provided by, Philadelphia's good cause residential eviction law.

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia there are more than 300,000 rental units, which is greater than the number of owner-occupied homes across the City; and

WHEREAS, The majority of renters are estimated to be cost-burdened, as they spend more than thirty percent of their income on rent; and

WHEREAS, Eighty-six percent of renters with incomes under $35,000 are estimated to be experiencing this burden; and

WHEREAS, Individuals evicted from their homes experience dire consequences like homelessness, joblessness, and physical and mental health challenges; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, evictions are disproportionately filed in areas with higher concentrations of African American residents and where the median household income is less than $45,000; and

WHEREAS, On October 5, 2017, Councilmember Jones introduced, and Councilmembers Gym and Parker co-sponsored, Bill No. 170854, an ordinance requiring landlords to show good cause for certain residential evictions and providing for a first option for existing tenants to renew a lease (as amended, the "Bill"); and

WHEREAS, Many Philadelphians have been subject to unnecessary, unjust and illegal evictions, as evidenced by the testimony during the hearing held by the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Law and Government on February 13, 2018; and

WHEREAS, The Mayor's Taskforce on Eviction Prevention and Response released a report in June, 2018, calling for, among other things, the enactment of good cause residential eviction legislation; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia City Council enacted the Bill on December 6, 2018 and the Mayor signed the Bill on January 22, 2019; and

WHEREAS, The Fair Housing Commission began enforcing the good cause residential eviction law on April 22, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Landlords have not universally complied with Philadelphia's good cause residential eviction law, and tenants have filed complaints with the Fair Housing Commission pursuant to the law; and

WHEREAS, The Fair Housing Commission has ruled on multiple occasions that landlords have violated Philadelphia's good cause residential eviction law; and

WHEREAS, Eviction is a pressing issue for many Philadelphians as evidenced by the over 19,000 evictions that were estimated to have been filed in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Preventing unnecessary, arbitrary and illegal evictions, and ensuring the effectiveness of Philadelphia's good cause residential eviction law, is paramount to the welfare of Philadelphians. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and the Homeless to explore the enforcement of, and the expansion of protections for renters provided by, Philadelphia's good cause residential eviction law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and the Homeless to hold public hearings on the enforcement of, and the expansion of protections for renters provided by, Philadelphia's good cause residential eviction law.

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