

Legislation Text

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Encouraging the First Judicial District to institute administrative rules that allow the court to seal evictions and corresponding civil matters between a landlord and a tenant in the interest of justice and without consent from the opposing party as well as invest in alternative processes of resolving landlord-tenant disputes. Further calling on the Pennsylvania State Legislature to amend the Landlord-Tenant Law of 1951 to allow for the sealing of evictions.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia adopted recommendations from the Mayor's Taskforce on Eviction Prevention. Recommendation 16, sealing evictions, required the City to advocate for state legislation to enable the sealing of eviction filings and to work with the Municipal Court to greatly reduce disclosures of tenant information to the public; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has recently averaged approximately one eviction for every 14 renters each year; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia adopted the Assessment of Fair Housing in 2016 which stipulates its duty to create and implement policies that affirmatively further fair housing under the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has recently passed a universal right to counsel for low-income tenants. Nevertheless, thousands of tenants have evictions on their records, and some will be forced to live in substandard housing or in unlicensed residences merely because of these evictions; and

WHEREAS, In Pennsylvania, Black female renters were filed against for eviction at more than double the rate of white renters. With this data, policies related to evictions have a disparate impact on renters based on protected classes: race and sex, specifically Black women; and

WHEREAS, The economic crisis created by COVID19 has created a historic backlog of evictions and will alter the housing market for decades without swift action; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL, Calls on the First Judicial District to institute administrative rules that allow the court to seal evictions and corresponding civil matter between a landlord and a tenant in the interest of justice and without consent from the opposing party as well as invest in alternative processes of resolving landlord-tenant disputes. Further calling on the Pennsylvania State Legislature to amend the Landlord-Tenant Law of 1951 to allow for the sealing of evictions.