



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

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Brown, Waters, Heck Introduce Legislation to Help Renters During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Bills Would Authorize \$100 Billion For An Emergency Rental Assistance Program To Help Renters Stay Housed During and After The Pandemic Lawmakers Call for Legislation To Be Included In The Next Coronavirus Relief Package

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) – ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Financial Services, and Congressman Denny Heck (D-WA) today announced new legislation, the [Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act of 2020](#). The bill was introduced in the House and Brown will soon introduce a companion bill in the Senate. The bills would establish an Emergency Rental Assistance program to provide \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance to help families and individuals pay their rent and remain housed during and after the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. Stabilizing renters and the rental market through this crisis will help the economy recover from the economic aftershocks of the pandemic.

“This pandemic is yet another painful reminder of just how vulnerable millions of workers are to a single setback – whether it is losing your job, a broken-down car, or just being late on rent,” said Senator Brown. **“Congress must act now to keep families in their homes. That’s why I am introducing the *Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act of 2020* to ensure that renters remain safely and affordably housed during and after this crisis.”**

“This legislation would create a \$100 billion emergency rental assistance fund to help struggling renters across the nation as well as mom and pop landlords relying on rental payments for their retirement,” said Chairwoman Waters. **“We must take immediate action to prevent the COVID-19 crisis from turning into a national eviction crisis. It is absolutely essential for the next COVID-19 relief package to include this bill.”**

“Millions of Americans are facing new financial uncertainty, through no fault of their own,” said Congressman Heck. **“This bill will help tenants pay their rent, without placing the burden on landlords, many of whom are relying on payments from renters to pay their mortgages. It is vital to our recovery and to the wellbeing of Americans that we do everything we can to keep people in their homes. I will continue working with Chair Waters, Ranking Member Brown, and congressional leadership to ensure we quickly get rent relief to Americans.”**

Specifically, the bills would:

- Authorize \$100 billion for an Emergency Rental Assistance program to help families and individuals pay their rent and utility bills and remain housed during and after the COVID-19 crisis.
- The program would send funds to communities, states, and tribes through an existing federal temporary rental assistance program to facilitate the rapid distribution of funds through an already-available administrative and reporting system.

The Senate bill is currently cosponsored by 25 of Brown's Democratic colleagues, including Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Tina Smith (D-MN), Jack Reed (D-RI), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Patty Murray (D-WA), Jeffrey A. Merkley (D-OR), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Kamala D. Harris (D-CA), Cory A. Booker (D-NJ), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), and Michael F. Bennet (D-CO).

More information about the *Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act of 2020* can be found [here](#). The bill has been [endorsed](#) by a diverse list of housing, state and local government, child advocacy, faith, health care, women's, civil rights, disability rights, and social welfare organizations. These groups include the National Alliance to End Homelessness, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Children's Defense Fund, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties, National Urban League, and National League of Cities.

“Even before the coronavirus, 11 million renters – including 8 million of America’s lowest-income seniors, people with disabilities, low-wage workers and other individuals – were paying at least half of their limited incomes to keep a roof over their heads, leaving them one financial crisis away from eviction and, in worst cases, homelessness. For many, this pandemic is that financial crisis,” stated Diane Yentel, president and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. **“Congress should be doing everything they can to keep people stably housed during and after this public health emergency by implementing a national moratorium on evictions and providing at least \$100 billion in rental assistance.”**

“Given the health and economic tsunami the COVID pandemic represents for low income and minority Americans, this rental assistance bill is essential,” stated Nan Roman, President, National Alliance to End Homelessness. **“Without it, many who were living on the edge prior to the pandemic will fall into homelessness as eviction moratoria and emergency financial assistance disappear. The National Alliance to End Homelessness fully supports this initiative to stave off a massive post-pandemic increase in homelessness.”**

“We know that eviction is a cause, not just a consequence, of poverty,” said Matthew Desmond, Maurice P. During Professor of Sociology Princeton University and Principal Investigator of the Eviction Lab. **“Permitting millions of renters to be evicted during this crisis would only deepen the struggle to**

recover from the health and economic consequences of the coronavirus. I strongly support the *Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act*, which will provide the rental assistance that families and individuals need to interrupt this vicious cycle.”

“Sen. Brown’s bill is a common sense response to the fact that so many renters are out of work but still have to pay the rent,” said Bill Faith, Executive Director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing In Ohio (COHHIO). “Ninety percent of Americans who lost their jobs in March work in low-wage industries, and low-wage workers are usually renters. The 630,000 renters in Ohio who have been laid off in recent weeks owe a combined \$500 million in rent each month and with the passage of first of the month there is a growing number people unable to pay their rent. We don’t yet know how long the pandemic will last, but the stability of America’s low-wage employees - our janitors, cashiers, retail sales clerks, restaurant and hotel workers – will largely determine the duration and intensity of the economic recession.”

“Direct financial assistance for the millions of Americans struggling to pay rent is needed now more than ever,” said Mike Kingsella, Executive Director of Up for Growth Action. “We applaud Senator Brown, Chairwoman Waters, and Congressman Heck for their continued leadership on behalf of the families worried about their ability to balance rent payments with protecting their health and wellbeing during a global pandemic – particularly the millions of Americans who were already rent-burdened or housing insecure. Up for Growth Action and our members across the country encourage Congress to include rental assistance in any future COVID-19 relief package.”

Senator Brown [has vowed to fight for more protections for renters](#) who are disproportionately impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic and has [repeatedly called](#) for [more relief](#) to be provided for renters and [homeowners](#) in [Coronavirus relief packages](#). Brown has also advocated for support for assisted housing and homeless service providers as well as housing counseling to help renters and homeowners understand their options in this tumultuous time.

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