

Dear Governor DeWine,

We want to begin this letter by thanking you for your extraordinary leadership in recent days. The work of your office along with the work of Director of Public Health Dr. Amy Acton has been swift, decisive, and will ultimately save lives over the course of the COVID-19 outbreak.

We are writing now because we believe simple, comparably small measures, must be taken now to complement the efforts already made by your office to protect vulnerable Ohioians. Namely, using the Governor's emergency powers, the state of Ohio should:

1. **Ban enforcement of all eviction judgments** by stopping court-ordered move-outs, including those that were scheduled before COVID-19 caused larger social disruption.
2. **Ban utility disconnections** and automatically turn on any utilities disconnected in the last 60 days
3. **Issue emergency homelessness prevention dollars** across the state in partnership with local non-profits that are able to efficiently disperse to at-risk households.

Both actions are necessary for the health and welfare of Ohioans and support our existing work towards social distancing and community health. Enforcing an eviction move-out will put an Ohio family onto the streets. Re-housing families is already hard, but it will only be harder as social distancing and our slowed economy make finding and moving into a new rental harder. An evicted family will be more likely than ever to enter the shelter system, which we know is already a point of strain in our management of COVID-19. For the moment, our best chance to keep families healthy is keep them where they are for the course of the outbreak. Across the state, every shelter system is at capacity and it is imperative that we prevent overcrowding in congregate settings while we manage the spread of COVID-19.

Similarly, banning utility disconnections and re-instituting recent disconnections will keep our families from being constructively evicted from their homes because of lack of utility service. Utility disconnection will cause the same likelihood of strain on the shelter system.

Under the first two provisions, the money owed will not change. Rent and/or utility payments can continue to accrue and can be collected at a future date. We recognize that there may come a time where mortgage or rental payments might be suspended nationally, but stopping the physical movement and/or the physical disconnection of utility services can be taken at the state level without affecting the underlying amounts owed. In addition, once the short term crisis is addressed, we would advocate for any and all measures from the Statehouse to support tenants and homeowners with rent and mortgage payments that have accrued during COVID-19 related work stoppages.

Eviction and utility disconnection moratoriums have already been implemented in San Jose, California, Miami-Dade County, Florida, and Atlanta, Georgia. We believe the number of localities considering these measures will grow in the coming days. Ohio has already been a step ahead of other states and we believe it should be a step ahead in this measure as well.

Thank you again for your time, consideration, and for your efforts during this time.