

433 Jefferson Street, Oakland, CA 94607 • Tel 510.768.3100 • www.cceb.org

May 19, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
Senate President Pro Tempore
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: The Need to Extend, Expand, and Improve SB 91 to Meet the Needs of Californians

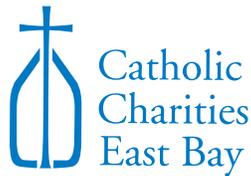
Dear Governor Newsom, Pro Tempore Atkins, and Speaker Rendon:

Catholic Charities East Bay urgently requests updates to SB 91. **Modifications to the State's rent relief program requirements and an extension of the eviction moratorium are necessary** to ensure that the funds reach low-income tenants and their landlords and to ensure that California does not face an eviction crisis now or in the future.

The need for rent relief is only growing and the situation puts both tenants and landlords at risk. Between January 1, 2021 and May 7, we have received 3,475 requests to provide rental relief to local renters, with \$15,000 being the highest level of need for one household.

Applications to date for emergency rental and utility assistance demonstrate the significant need for changes to the program. We respectfully request the following changes:

- 100% support to eligible landlords
- 100% support to tenants, even when their landlord is not participating
- Lift the current caps on prospective rent
- Maintain eviction protections until low-wage jobs have recovered to pre-pandemic levels and rental assistance funds have been distributed to all who are eligible
- Full relief of utility payments, as federal law allows
- Simplify the application process and remove language and other barriers to accessing the program.
- Even when temporary eviction protections end, no tenant should be evicted if they are eligible for rental assistance but have not yet received it, or if their landlord received assistance to clear all back rent owed



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- Protect people from long-term debt and credit damage
- Put a stay to court proceedings for tenants who have not been able to access relief and allow them the time to apply for debt relief assistance

These suggested modifications align with what the majority of Californians feel the State needs to provide to struggling renters. According to a new statewide poll, more than 60% of Californians support an extension of the state's eviction moratorium and 64% want [the state] to deliver \$5.2 billion to help low-income renters to pay back-rent and make future rent payments.

Making these improvements and removing many of SB 91's restrictions will allow greater flexibility to expend the funds, and extending the eviction moratorium will give us the time to reach all eligible tenants and their landlords. Implementing changes now will help meet the needs of low-income households within Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and across California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Margaret Peterson, CEO
Catholic Charities East Bay