



Access Living SUPPORTS

HB 5574, House Amendment 1

Access Living supports the COVID-19 Emergency and Economic Recovery Renter and Homeowner Protection Act as sponsored by Representative Delia Ramirez. People with disabilities and their families were already more likely to live in poverty before the pandemic and its attendant economic fallout. As unemployment rolls continue to swell, the impact will again be shouldered most by those most unable to bear it. As moratoria on foreclosures and evictions begin to be lifted, waves of individuals and families will be thrown into homelessness. When this happens to disabled people, the only options are nursing homes or other congregate care settings, or the streets. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues for an undetermined amount of time, institutional settings, temporary shelters, and densely-clustered outdoor encampments will continue to be among the most dangerous places for disease transmission. Nearly half of Illinois' COVID-19 cases have been reported in some kind of congregate setting, primarily nursing homes and jails or prisons. There have also been exceptionally high case counts in homeless shelters and encampments. These locations contain disproportionately high numbers of people with all kinds of disabilities.

Legislative action must be taken now to prevent the mass displacement of the people most at risk of eviction or foreclosure when courts reopen and back payments become due. Representative Ramirez's bill puts necessary protections in place to keep people in their homes, which crucially also limits the spread of the novel coronavirus at this time. The bill also prevents discrimination against people who have, or are perceived to have COVID-19, which is another crucial protection. It's more clear than ever before that securely housing everyone, regardless of their age, race, disability, background, or income level, is vital to protecting public health and limiting the spread of all kinds of infectious diseases. People with disabilities are among the most likely to have compromised immune systems, so this pandemic has fallen especially hard on our community. Access to safe, secure, and steady housing will do almost as much to keep disabled people healthy as any vaccine.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Ballard

Housing and Transportation Policy Analyst

(708) 945-3893; aballard@accessliving.org