

Name: Julia Buck

Representing: Julia Buck

Supporting: HB-5574 HA 1 Emergency Rental and Homeowner Protection Act

Testimony:

I am writing to support HB-5574 HA 1 for a much needed rent freeze. Nobody should be made homeless during a pandemic. Homelessness and insecure housing will lead to worse public health outcomes. Throwing people out of their homes for economic circumstances that are usually out of their control is unconscionable under normal circumstances--everyone should have access to safe housing--but particularly cruel during a pandemic.

I live in a household with two roommates, two graduate students and an office worker. We are economically privileged compared to many, but find ourselves in an impossible situation. My roommate who is an international student does not qualify for any federal aid or stimulus since she is not a citizen. Both her and I cannot file for unemployment since we are students. She had to move back to her home country with two days notice before they shut down the international airports, which have been closed since mid-March. Suddenly my other roommate and I are in a position where our living expenses are divided in two instead of three. Our landlord refused to grant a rent reduction and we are on a two year lease. We applied the deposit to our rent for May, but June is right around the corner. Our situation is better than that of thousands in Illinois and even we, who are careful savers, are running out of options quickly.

There are enough apartments for everybody. The question is not one of supply, but rather of political will. Be the kind of person who will ensure that our communities can count on safe places to sleep at night, when so much else in this world is uncertain.