



Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
Centre pour les droits à l'égalité au logement

Press Release

July 2, 2020

Statement on Amendments to Bill 184

Last week, CERA sent a submission to the Ontario Legislature's Standing Committee on Social Policy on *Bill 184: Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Communities*. In our submission, CERA outlined its grave concerns that the bill will expedite eviction, undermine access to justice, and have negative financial impacts on tenants. These impacts will affect Ontario's most vulnerable the hardest – individuals who are low income, racialized, newcomers, and persons with disabilities.

We were therefore shocked today to find out that the Ontario government is doubling down on removing protections for tenants with several proposed amendments to the bill that will make what will already be a bad situation worse. The government's amendments propose to:

- Require Landlord and Tenant Board adjudicators to consider whether a landlord tried to negotiate a settlement agreement with the tenant prior to moving forward with the eviction process. This could be used as an argument in the landlord's favour at the hearing, and could encourage landlords to bully and attempt to coerce tenants into agreements they cannot meet due to job loss and financial crisis as a result of COVID;
- Remove the requirement that both parties agree to mediation at the Landlord and Tenant Board. This could result in tenants being forced into mediation and losing their right to due process;
- Bring sections 15, 16, 22, 30 and 31 into force immediately upon Royal Assent, instead of later at proclamation, which means they will directly impact tenants affected by COVID-19 despite Premier Ford stating that "No one will be kicked out of their home or their rental apartments based on not being able to pay the rent – it's just not going to happen, we won't allow it to happen." This means that Bill 184's new rules that would prohibit tenants from raising issues at eviction hearings and allowing for evictions without a hearing for tenants who default on their repayment agreements will come into force immediately.

Bill 184 and the amendments announced today are coming forward in the context of an unprecedented economic crisis caused by COVID-19, where an estimated 50,000 arrears applications await processing when the current eviction moratorium is lifted.¹ Reintroducing this bill which weakens protections for tenants at a time when this government has provided no dedicated financial or other support to tenants is disgraceful. The mass homelessness that could result from this bill will be one of the most significant human rights crises that this province will ever face.

We are calling on the Ontario government to repeal the proposed changes to Bill 184 and to not proceed with the elements of Bill 184 that will evict thousands of Ontario renters, many into homelessness. Strengthening our communities includes protecting tenants, not undermining their right to an adequate home.
