



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

Bill 184 will roll back important protections for tenants' security of tenure and the right to housing

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Home is at the centre of human rights. Without a safe, affordable, secure, and accessible home, our other rights—such as privacy, freedom of expression, equality, liberty, security of the person, dignity, and even life—are threatened. Over the past several months, the global COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the importance of a secure home to not only our health, but to our very survival.

In June 2019, the Government of Canada passed the *National Housing Strategy Act*, recognizing the right to housing as a fundamental human right and that all levels of government have the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to housing in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

One of the most fundamental elements of the right to housing is the security of tenure or, to put it simply, the fundamental right to stay in one's home. Security of tenure guarantees tenants protection from forced or arbitrary eviction. Security of tenure allows tenants to live without the fear of being displaced at the whim of their landlord. Security of tenure allows tenants to live peaceful and productive lives.

In 1979, Ontario tenants won important protections for their security of tenure, guaranteeing that they would not lose their homes without the due process of the law, which includes a hearing before an independent tribunal and the opportunity to plead their case. This was an important and fundamental step forward to advance the right to housing in Ontario.

Bill 184 threatens to reverse these important advancements in the right to housing. If passed, Bill 184 will:

- Speed up the eviction process by allowing landlords to evict tenants who have defaulted on repayment agreements without a hearing and order from an adjudicator at the Landlord and Tenant Board;
- Prevent tenants from requesting compensation for illegal rent increases in some circumstances;
- Allow landlords to pursue *former* tenants for utility and rent arrears at the Landlord and Tenant Board; and
- Allow landlords to seek financial compensation from tenants in cases of interference of reasonable enjoyment of a unit.



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These changes to Bill 184 threaten the right to adequate housing and, in particular, the security of tenure of all Ontarians. It is particularly troubling that this policy is being advanced in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic.

As has been made abundantly clear in recent weeks, stable housing is key to being able to maintain physical distancing requirements recommended by our public health authorities. Without question, speeding up the eviction process puts the health and wellbeing of Ontarians in jeopardy at a time that our governments should be doing everything they can to support people.

We urge the Ontario government to reverse its reckless position on evictions in Bill 184 and instead commit to ensuring the right to housing for all Ontarians in line with the Canadian government's commitment to the right to housing. Now, more than ever, we need governments to lead with compassion and purpose, and take care of those who are worst positioned to weather this storm.