

Comment Report

SSB 1079

A bill for an act relating to the authority of counties and cities to regulate rental housing, and including effective date provisions.(See SF 252.)

Subcommittee Members: Garrett-CH, Lofgren, Quirmbach

Date: 02/02/2021

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: 217 Conference Room

Name: Shelley Skuster

Comment: It's wrong to push this legislation during a pandemic when many people are facing unemployment and eviction.If landlords accept federal COVID relief, they should not be able to turn down renters who pay with federal housing vouchers. Please oppose this bill.

Name: Carrie Gosnell

Comment: Please kill this bill.I don't understand why it matters where a renter's rent check comes from as long as the landlord received payment. The only reason I can see it mattering is by not wanting "those type of people" in your building. Any statement of the sort automatically rings the discrimination alarm. More importantly, affordable housing has always been an issue in Iowa. And now, while we are in the middle of a pandemic, when more people than ever need these programs, you are discussing the option to discriminate based on it. That makes no sense, and it lacks empathy for our Iowa residents who are suffering the most through this crisis. Why are we even discussing something that would put families on the street? This is awful!

Name: Zoami Calles-Rios Sosa

Comment: This bill seems so illogical and unnecessary. You are essentially going to punish those who get help (such as government money to pay their rent). The people we need to be helping as a whole are the very same targeted to get punished with this bill. We need to have compassion and kindness for those who are in need, not put obstacles in their way so that they can never get out of the social economic cycles of poverty at the bottom. And to think that landlords won't use this bill to their advantage and personal biases is not wanting to see the reality of life. We are people, and we have biases. We don't need the government to cement those biases into our law. This bill needs to be stopped.

Name: Christine Sommers

Comment: Please kill this bill. SBB 1079 comes off as quite discriminatory toward lower income tenants, especially those who might use federal housing vouchers to pay for their rent.Affordable housing is a huge issue in Iowa and across the country, and this bill opens the doors for landlords to discriminate against potential renters based on their race, national origin, or income, using their federal vouchers as cover for this discrimination. While I would not support this at any time, I find it particularly problematic as we are now in month 11 of a personally and economically devastating pandemic that has resulted in significant unemployment and housing/financial insecurity for thousands in the state and millions nationwide. Finally, it feels unfair that landlords who may be recipients of federal COVID relief would be in the position to turn down renters paying with federal housing vouchers.

Name: Z-Shan Bhaidani

Comment: It's a little more criminal than tasteless, the idea that during a recession and pandemic we're choosing to take tax payer dollars and government officials' time to look at a bill that punishes poor Iowans who are may use federal housing vouchers to pay their lease. Not only is the relegation of voucher recipients to a category of people that can be denied housing indiscriminately the issue, it's the hypocrisy that there's also a bill to take public dollars for private school vouchers. So not only is there potential legislation to give parents with access even more money at the expense of all students, we're now looking at people who are using federal dollars (rent \$ is rent \$ to a landlord) to have *any* housing access as a group that can be openly turned away?This bill is insulting. Especially during a time where a majority of people approve some type of additional financial stimulus and we're seeing increased homelessness all throughout Iowa and especially in urban areas that seek to get their new, pricier real estate filled with paying customers. The idea that people can use federal stimulus checks to pay rent (or anything they want) but those who use housing vouchers will be specifically denied housing seems to be an antipoor stance that is as classist and out of touch with working Iowans as the voucher bill (that's already being condemned by most as a cash grab from, and for, the *few*).

Name: Claire Olsem

Comment: Affordable housing is one of the most urgent issues in our state and especially in our urban areas but really even in small towns affordable housing is hard to come by.This bill opens the door for landlords to discriminate against potential renters based on race, national origin, income, etc., using the federal vouchers as cover for their decisions. The bill takes away one more tool of local municipalities to address local housing needs, which an absolutely critical issue, especially given the current crisis. It's beyond wrong to push this legislation during a pandemic in which thousands of people are facing unemployment, underemployment and eviction.If landlords accept federal COVID relief they should not be able to turn down renters who pay with federal housing vouchers who cares where the money comes from of the rent is pad why does it matter?Please vote no this is not the bill to be advancing right now. It only kicks people while they are down.

Name: Luke Elzinga

Comment: The Des Moines Area Religious Council is registered against this bill. Even before the pandemic, many communities in Iowa were facing affordable housing crises. In Polk County, we are 8,000 units short of affordable housing. Our state government should be focusing on creating more affordable housing and access to housing for our residents, not giving landlords the legal right to discriminate based on source of income. This proposal is especially troubling in light of the current Presidential administration's affordable housing plan, which includes expanding the number of Section 8 vouchers. Section 8 vouchers are a guaranteed payment for landlords, so this is not about whether or not individuals will be able to pay, it's classism, plain and simple. This is about landlords not wanting "those people" living in their units. It's time we solve the affordable housing crisis, not make life more difficult for poor people. I urge you to do the right thing and not advance this bill out of subcommittee.

Name: Jane Robinette

Comment: I would say to supporters of this legislation, especially landlords: If you obtain government funds to help develop property or you get a tax break for such, you should have no problem accepting federal vouchers for rent payment. If you receive COVID relief money directly as a landlord, or through rent payments made possible by COVID checks, you should have no problem accepting federal rent vouchers. If the rent is paid by federal voucher, you should have no problem because the rent is being paid!This bill simply stigmatizes a category of people who are already struggling, leaves open the real potential for prohibited discrimination to hide, and threatens to exacerbate the already urgent problem of lack of affordable housing in our communities.Vote no on SSB 1079.

Name: Angie Arthur

Comment: In working for an organization that facilitates a community response to homelessness, the facts are clear that affordable housing is paramount to ending homelessness. Housing Choice Vouchers are an important tool to achieving this goal. There are many kinds of housing choice vouchers. All are important in helping citizens with lower incomes find a safe place to call home. I strongly urge you to vote no on moving SSB 1079 forward. As mentioned, there are many different kinds of housing choice vouchers. Here are few of vouchers used in Iowa. The HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers helps veterans from all over Iowa find and keep affordable housing. The Mainstream Vouchers program assists individuals with disabilities who have been homeless maintain housing. The Family Unification Program supports families and youth aging out of foster care programs from across Iowa find affordable housing.

Name: Brian Carter

Comment: Defeat this , ssb 1079. I served on a Section 8 Housing board. The only reason this bill might be passed is to defeat the federal civil rights guidelines. Please defeat it. The United Methodist is for the civil rights of all people. The United Methodist Church is against this bill

Name: Barbara Klubal

Comment: There is an extreme lack of affordable housing in our state. The problem has only been exacerbated by the Covid19 pandemic and its economic impact. To put forth a bill that will further limit housing for those who most need it, now more than ever is beyond unfair. Some of these people are at risk of homelessness. Our elected officials are public servants. I see nothing in this bill that serves the public. I urge you not to support SSB1079.