



Hearing of the Economic & Urban Development Committee
Council Resolution #21-0036R – Avoiding an Eviction Crisis
Position: Support

Dear Chairwoman Middleton and Members of the Economic & Urban Development Committee,

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU- the largest healthcare workers union in the country, where we represent 5,000 members in Baltimore City alone. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown an undeniable spotlight on systemic discrimination across the board, and housing inequality is not immune to this problem. Not only is affordable housing a human right on an individual level, but making sure people are housed benefits public health city-wide. Whereas the City of Baltimore has received over 5,000 applications of eviction assistance, **our union is in favor of Resolution #20-0625 to bring forth various stakeholders to discuss and disseminate solutions regarding Baltimore’s current eviction crisis.**

Due to the unemployment crisis caused by COVID-19, Baltimoreans still remain out of work and are at risk of eviction – which can fuel a homelessness crisis that will prevent people from staying home, and drive them towards shelters that are prone to COVID-19 outbreaks¹. If enough people cannot stay home especially given the new variants of COVID-19, we will continue to see adverse public health and economic impacts of COVID19 rippling through the city. For this reason, passing this resolution would allow for the proper planning and intergovernmental cooperation to occur to decrease the amount of families being put out on the streets.

Members of 1199SEIU are hospital and long-term care workers on the frontlines of COVID-19 every day, and due to the nature of their work, they continue to be at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19. Most 1199 members are still not receiving hazard pay, adequate PPE, and enough rapid-result testing despite the sacrifices they are making. As variants of COVID-19 continue to rise in Baltimore, the majority of our members who work or live in Baltimore also have the possibility of facing evictions. For these reasons, we need to do everything in our power to have the Baltimore government to coordinate efforts to create solutions for the current and . **Please vote YES on Resolution 21-0036.**

Respectfully,

Ricarra Jones
Political Director
1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
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¹ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-homeless-covid-update-20200423-7mwvc7ioijh6dmknzokjcn4n7i-story.html>