

Snapshot of 2021 Renters' Rights Priorities

Expanding the Right of Redemption and Improving Post-Payment Notice (Delegate Price)

- Eliminates the once-every-twelve-months limitation on a tenant's right to pay everything owed and cancel the eviction. As long as the landlord is made whole by full payment at least two days before the scheduled eviction, the eviction should be cancelled.
- Requires clear notice to tenants that any partial payment of rent will NOT cancel the eviction as well as notice that only payment of all rent, late fees, and (if applicable) attorney's and sheriff's fees owed will cancel the eviction.

Making Payment Plans and 14-Day Pay-or-Quit Notice Permanent (HB1889; Delegate Price)

- Bill passed during 2020 special session extends the pay-or-quit period to 14 days (from five days) and requires all landlords with five or more units to offer payment plans to tenants who fall behind on rent.
- 2021 bill simply removes the sunset clause and keeps this new law in place after June 30, 2021.

Strengthening the Prohibition on Unlawful Evictions (Senator Ebbin/Delegate Hudson)

- Adds \$5,000 statutory damages provision to the law prohibiting landlords from using "self-help" eviction (forcing tenants out of their homes without getting a court order by changing the locks, terminating power to the home, removing doors and windows, etc.).
- Requires that courts expedite relief from unlawful eviction cases on the docket, holding initial hearings within five days of when the case is filed whenever possible.

Strengthening Protections for Tenants in Military (Senator Bell/Delegate Tran)

- Prohibits provisions in residential leases waiving rights provided by the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA). The SCRA gives active duty servicemembers the right to a continuance and a court-appointed guardian ad litem if they are sued.

Increasing Protections for Vulnerable Tenants During COVID-19 (Delegate Carr)

- Requires landlords to give tenants more notice of an intent to enter their home for non-emergency reasons to allow those with COVID-19-related and other health vulnerabilities to voice objection.
- Limited to state-of-emergency and includes an emergency clause.

VPLC also supports increasing funding to the Virginia Housing Trust Fund and the establishment of a public database of all Mobile Home Communities in Virginia.

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