



NAACP

Alaska Oregon Washington State Area Conference

Washington State House of Representatives
PO Box 40500
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: HB 1453

Dear Representatives,

The Washington State House of Representatives took a momentous step towards dismantling the institutionalized racism in our housing market by passing HB 1453, a bill that would reform the eviction process Tuesday. We applaud all of the lawmakers who voted in support of this measure, but we are deeply frustrated with the lawmakers, in particular those we previously thought of as allies, who voted against this bill.

By voting no on HB 1453, these lawmakers voted against the interests of their constituents, especially communities of color. It is even more troubling to hear that many of these lawmakers who voted no on this bill are landlords or related to landlords, and their vote seemed to be motivated more by personal financial interest instead of the well-being of the community.

This vote demonstrates that it is not only white people who uphold white supremacy in our system. There is no question that eviction reform is a racial justice issue:

- Black adults are evicted 5.5 times more than whites in King County, 6.8 times more in Pierce County.¹
- Black women are seven times more likely to be evicted than white women.²
- Between 2013 and 2017, one in 11 Black adults was evicted in King County while only one in 100 white adults were evicted.³
- In Pierce County, one in six Black adults was evicted between 2013 and 2017, compared to one in 50 white adults.⁴

¹ Thomas, T., Toomet, O., Kennedy, I., Ramiller, A. (2019). The State of Evictions: Results from the University of Washington Evictions Project. *University of Washington*.

² Id.

³ Id.

⁴ Id.



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- In 2017, over half of the evictions filed against tenants in Seattle were people of color - and a third of the evictions were filed against Black tenants, far higher than would be expected based on the demographics of Seattle.⁵
- Research has shown that Black women are the most likely demographic to be evicted - and the risk of eviction increases if they have children.^{6,7}

Our laws are designed to lock up Black men through incarceration - and lock out Black women through eviction. If the legislature does not pass eviction reform, then it is clear that neither party is serious about addressing racial inequity, housing instability, or poverty. We are tired of lip service.

We demand the legislature actually takes substantial steps towards ending the racism within our housing market - and the first step to achieving this is by reforming our eviction process. Further, we will support efforts to unseat legislators who vote against tenant protections.

Sincerely,

Gerald Hankerson, President
NAACP State Area Conference
<http://www.naacpaowsac.org/>

⁵ Cookson, T., Diddams, M., Maykovich, X., Witter, E. (2018) Losing Home: The Human Cost of Eviction in Seattle. *Seattle Women's Commission and King County Bar Association*

⁶ Desmond, M. (2012). Eviction and the reproduction of urban poverty. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118, 88-133.

⁷ Desmond M., Weihua A., Richelle W., Thomas F., (2013). Evicting children. *Social Forces*, 92, 303-327