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Legislature passes ‘Notice to Quit’ upgrade

Senate Bill 245 would extend notification period on month-to-month rentals

Colorado’s growing population and booming economy have created an ideal market for landlords – often, at the expense of renters. While concrete policy solutions to the state’s housing crisis remain elusive, Colorado legislators are considering a number of measures that could ease the burden on renters during the 2017 legislative session.

One of those measures, Senate Bill 245, received final approval from the Colorado House of Representatives in a bipartisan vote of 39-26 today. Commonly known as the Notice to Quit Act, SB 245 extends the notification period for rent increases, or notices to vacate property, from seven to 21 days. Developed by Colorado Center on Law and Policy, SB 245 was sponsored by Sen. Kevin Priola, R-Henderson and Rep. Dan Pabon, D-Denver.

Landlords currently are only required to give seven days’ notice on rent increases or terminations on "month-to-month" tenancies –potentially leaving tenants out in the cold in Colorado’s tight housing market. Recent reports indicate that Colorado’s population of homeless families has been growing as affordable housing becomes harder and harder to find. Having only seven days to find a new home would be problematic for anyone, but the short notice is even more onerous for those with disabilities, senior citizens, low-income individuals with few affordable options and tenants with young children. Though landlords have a right to raise rent or end a month-to-month tenancy, renters need more than seven days to secure a new place, pack their household and move.

Currently, 47 states require more than seven days’ notice on month-to-month tenancies. In fact, most states require 30 days notification - and some states require an even longer period of time. SB 245 also requires renters to provide 21 days’ notice to a landlord before moving, which will be helpful should the market slacken again.

“Housing is a nonpartisan issue,” said Claire Levy, Executive Director of CCLP. “While the Notice to Quit Act won’t stabilize rising rent in parts of Colorado or create new affordable-housing units, it will give renters a chance to coordinate plans to move and more time to find another place to live when their month-to-month lease is terminated. SB 245 will give renters more peace of mind in this competitive housing market. This bill shows how stakeholders, consumers and lawmakers can work together in developing sensible policy that benefits working Coloradans. CCLP thanks Sen. Priola, Rep. Pabon and our advocacy partners for making this bill a success.”

The legislation now heads to the desk of Gov. John Hickenlooper to be signed into law.

The Colorado Center on Law and Policy is a nonprofit, non-partisan research and advocacy organization that engages in legislative, administrative and legal advocacy on behalf of low-income Coloradans.