

Fact Sheet: Impacts of Indiana House and Senate Bills “Squatters Bills” on Tenants

Indiana House and Senate Bills (HB 1079, SB 70, SB 12) propose major changes to how evictions work. These bills take away important protections for tenants, including their right to a fair hearing before being forced out of their homes.

Under **Current Law** Landlords must go to court to evict tenants. Tenants have a chance to show evidence and explain their side.

Under These Bills Landlords can bypass the courts. They file a statement with law enforcement, and the police can remove people without a hearing or judicial review.

Why This is a Problem

These bills would make it easier for landlords to remove tenants, but at the cost of fairness and housing stability. Taking courts out of the process means tenants lose important rights and protections, making it harder to fight wrongful evictions. Replacing legal procedures with police actions puts tenants at greater risk of homelessness and abuse. Here are some of the ways these bills harm tenants:

Less Protection for Tenants

Tenants can be removed without a chance to present their case or prove they have the right to live in the property.

Verbal agreements or month-to-month tenancies are harder to prove on short notice, leaving tenants vulnerable.

Increased Risk of Mistakes

Police, who are not trained to handle housing disputes, might wrongly identify lawful tenants as squatters. This could lead to people being unfairly removed from their homes.

Greater Risk of Homelessness

Tenants can be forced out quickly with little or no warning. Wrongfully evicted tenants have to sue for damages later, which doesn't help them find immediate shelter.

Encourages Abuse by Landlords

Landlords could use this process to evict tenants without following the proper legal steps. False or misleading statements by landlords are hard to challenge under these bills.

Unfair Burden on Tenants

Tenants are expected to prove they have the right to live in the property, even after being removed. Low-income tenants, those without legal help, and people in informal agreements are hit hardest.

Disproportionate Impact on Vulnerable Groups

Immigrants, survivors of domestic violence, and others who may fear police involvement are especially at risk. These groups may leave their homes rather than face law enforcement, even if they have the right to stay.

Unbalanced Power

Without court oversight, landlords gain more power to dictate terms and evict tenants unfairly. Tenants may feel pressured not to assert their rights, such as requesting repairs or disputing unfair treatment.

Questions

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