

Rebecca Seawright



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December 28, 2020 -- Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright announced today the passage of state legislation she co-sponsored that extends and expands protections for renters and small landlords facing financial distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seawright said the COVID-19 Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2020 would temporarily stay evictions and residential mortgage foreclosures until May 1.

“Speaker Heastie has rightfully pointed out that housing is a basic human right. In this winter of a devastating pandemic, this fundamental right is an absolute and urgent necessity,” said Seawright.

“More evictions will lead to more infections and more deaths. The devastating job and income loss, societal disruption, and business closings we’ve seen this year have made keeping a roof over New Yorkers’ heads even more challenging. The lack of rental income hurts small property owners. They need our help. I am proud to have cosponsored this legislation which benefits those most in need.”

The legislation will:

- Protect, until May 1, 2021, residential tenants at risk of non-payment or holdover eviction who cannot pay their rent and attest to financial hardship or face significant health-related hardship.
- Provide tenants subject to eviction proceedings filed either before March 7, 2020 or since March 7, 2020, would have the opportunity to seek coverage under the bill by completing a hardship declaration form.
- Allow homeowners and those who own 10 or fewer dwelling units to seek a mortgage foreclosure stay or tax lien sale and foreclosure stay until May 1, 2021.

Seawright said the new protections are a step in the right direction.

“We must also raise revenue by requiring the wealthiest among us to pay their fair share. We must prevent devastating cuts to schools, local services, and vital health care programs. We must do more. The Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2020 is just one part of what we need to do to cope with the pandemic.”

She added that federal aid for rental assistance in the latest stimulus must ease the rental burden on tenants in arrears and small “mom and pop” landlords who rent apartments to put food on their tables.

“We must prioritize this federal funding these New Yorkers in need. Tenants, homeowners, and small property owners are fundamental to healthy, thriving communities,” she said.