

United States Senate

July 29, 2020

The Honorable Benjamin S. Carson
Secretary
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Carson:

As our nation continues to grapple with the worsening COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to extend and expand eviction protections for renter households.

We are grateful that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) took steps at the onset of the pandemic to provide protections for homeowners and renters affected by the economic crisis. We especially applaud your implementation of a 60-day moratorium on all foreclosures for federally-backed mortgages and the subsequent extension of that moratorium. We were also pleased to see that you encouraged Public Housing entities and owners of HUD-assisted multi-family properties to temporarily halt evictions that would result in residents becoming homeless or otherwise experiencing housing instability.

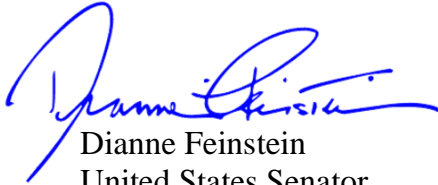
The Urban Institute has estimated these administrative actions, combined with eviction protections provided through the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136), are protecting 12.3 million households (about 28 percent of all renters) from eviction nationwide. Unfortunately, the CARES Act protections are expiring, leaving many public housing residents, households using Housing Choice Vouchers, and residents of both FHA-insured multifamily properties and multifamily-assisted properties vulnerable to eviction. It is imperative that HUD step in to provide eviction protections across all of its programs for the duration of this public health emergency.

If we let existing protections expire, millions of Americans could face eviction, a disproportionate number of whom will be people of color. According to a weekly survey by the United States Census Bureau, 30 percent of adults in California either missed their last housing payment or have little or no confidence in being able to make next month's housing payment. Any gap in coverage, even for just a few days, will leave tenants and households vulnerable to housing instability, evictions, foreclosures, and homelessness. Without continued protections from eviction and displacement, many will find themselves forced out onto the streets in the midst of a pandemic.


It is imperative that the administration continue to do everything within its power to keep American families in their homes. Given that President Trump said publicly this morning that he wants to prevent evictions, it is our hope that you will act without delay. People losing their homes during this pandemic will not only cause unnecessary hardship and suffering, but will also increase their risk of exposure to the virus, ultimately undermining the nation's recovery.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator