

Public comment received by Ward 4 office on Ord 21-21 Repealing Chapter 193 of the Legislative Code related to Tenant Protections

Thank you, Ms. Jalali for your words at the City Council meeting today about the first reading of the repealing of the tenant protections. I am a renter in Ward 4. I am on disability for mental illness. I am very worried that if the tenant protections get repealed, landlords will be against future protections, too. I appreciate your consideration in the meeting of the importance of this.

Thank you again,  
Deena Strohman

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Dear Council Member Mitra Jalali,

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As you know, the majority of St. Paul residents are renters. The numbers are especially high for households of color; according to the American Community Survey in 2019, 82% of Black residents in St. Paul rent their homes, as do 64% of Native American residents, 62% of Latino residents, and 58% of Asian residents. This is one reason why, as community leaders have known and expressed for decades, protections for renters are unequivocally an issue of racial justice.

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In passing this ordinance, the City Council took a bold step in the right direction - but St. Paul residents were also promised this was only the first step on a longer journey toward housing equity for everyone in our city. Instead, the City Council is prepared to take a step backwards, to betray over half the city's residents under pressure from predatory corporate landlords. The protections offered by this ordinance have countless precedents across the nation. This piece of legislation, while deeply meaningful to renters in St. Paul, is not outlandish or revolutionary. It is a slate of proven, court-tested, common-sense protections that lay the groundwork for renters to put down roots and flourish in our communities.

These communities are worth fighting for. As Council Member Jalali said in the first reading of the effort to repeal this ordinance, "None of us can back down from our responsibility to continue fighting for renters in any avenue, even as that battle presents new fronts."

A vote to repeal the SAFE Housing ordinance is abandoning our city's renters at this pivotal moment. Don't be bullied by corporate and predatory landlords who will oppose and litigate any protections for tenants. Oppose the repeal of the ordinance, and help ensure that St. Paul lives up to its name as "the most livable city in America".

Sincerely,

Sincerely,  
Maddy Flisk  
1550 Eustis St Saint Paul, MN 55108-1277

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Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Karen Shapiro

840 Howell St N Saint Paul, MN 55104-1026

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Good afternoon,

I recently read Judge Manguson's injunction regarding the S.A.F.E. housing ordinance. I wanted to share a few of my thoughts.

A) It is deeply disappointing at a moral level that a coalition of landlords see their only moral obligation to our community being profit collection. It is not, however, not surprising.

B) By design, injunctions are supposed to be easy to accomplish so parties have an ability to discuss the actual merits of case.

[Magnuson's order](#) says it plainly: "While no factor is dispositive, 'the absence of a likelihood of success on the merits strongly suggests that preliminary injunctive relief should be denied.' [Barrett v. Claycomb, 705 F.3d 315, 320](#) (8th Cir. 2013)." That's kind of legal hullabaloo, but the best way I can describe it is this: imagine two children fighting. You discover the two children fighting and one kid is on top of the other. You don't know who started it, and that fact doesn't really matter right now. You put both kids on opposite sides of the room to stop the fight. That's an injunction. By design, an injunction stops the disagreement so that an authority can figure out what is relevant to this argument. The only reason you \*wouldn't\* stop this fight is because it doesn't look serious. See *Barrett v. Claycomb*.

In the case of the city, it is important to remember this is just an injunction. The landlords haven't come up with their litany of facts proving their case, yet. They might not have good facts. They might have great facts. Remember landlords were already talking about suing even before the S.A.F.E. ordinance went into effect. I think there is something to be said for not letting landlords push the city around. After all, this city is 50% renter. As a citizen and not a lawyer I can't give you legal advice. However I ask you this: Why should money dictate power?

C) More importantly, why should money dictate law? Attached are a few ALR articles that I found prior to the S.A.F.E. ordinance describing constitutionality of regulating landlords. 134 ALR 841, 93 ALR2d 1136. These are long and I am not a lawyer so I can't really give you any advice on them. Here are two general points though: (1) A *lot* of states have said it is *totally fair* to regulate a landlord's property rights in pursuit of the common good. (2) Minnesota doesn't appear to have addressed this in the courts.

Applied to where we are now, my question is this: Why should landlords be the ones using the judicial branch to write Minnesota's controlling law? Even judges with the most conservative minds deeply protect the legislature's right to make laws as they see fit. As the city, you are empowered by charter with the legislative power of the state. Why should a small group of especially wealthy individuals rewrite the law? This was a 7-0 vote that was incredibly popular. Simply put, writing laws and ordinances is the job of city council. It is the job of the judicial branch to interpret these laws and do so with a light touch. It is hard for me to believe that any judge would completely disregard the legislature and gut an entire ordinance, especially considering ordinances such as this are controlling in other jurisdictions.

That being said, I am no judge and I am no lawyer. It is, however, my strong citizen opinion that this ordinance is worth fighting for.

Best Regards,

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Dan Choma

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Since the majority of St. Paul residents are renters and primarily families of color, protections for renters are unequivocally an issue of racial justice.

Oppose the repeal of the ordinance, and help ensure that St. Paul lives up to its name as "the most livable city in America".

Sincerely,

Leanne Sponsel

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Leanne Sponsel

1532 Pascal St N Saint Paul, MN 55108-2329 [leannemsponsel@gmail.com](mailto:leannemsponsel@gmail.com)

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Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Christine Kwong

2265 Luther Pl Saint Paul, MN 55108-1486 [kwong001@umn.edu](mailto:kwong001@umn.edu)

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Dear Council Member Jalali,

I am writing to strongly oppose repeal of the Safe Housing Tenant Protections. All citizens of St. Paul deserve safe housing, a place to call home. I understand the complexities of the issue, but the solution cannot be to kick individuals and families out to live on the street or even in the dorm like situations that the city is able to provide.

One question I have: Couldn't the city regulations say that land owners need to set aside a certain number/percentage of the apartments in large buildings that have been or currently are being built in the city be set aside for people who are unhoused? Perhaps in trade for some tax relief?

Children need stable housing. Their parents need stable housing to be able to work. We cannot be a city that disregards the needs of these citizens and perpetuates the handicaps that accompany the unhoused over generations.

Thank you  
Susan Cobin  
651-655-1508



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Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Alison O'Brien

1406 Almond Ave Saint Paul, MN 55108-2536 [kobernata@gmail.com](mailto:kobernata@gmail.com)

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Sincerely,

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Phoebe Thoroughman

1696 Ashland Ave Saint Paul, MN 55104-6146 [pjthoroughman@gmail.com](mailto:pjthoroughman@gmail.com)

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Dear Council Member Mitra Jalali,

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I listened to the Council meeting last Wednesday and I did appreciate your eloquent message about how you are still going to work for tenant protections. Thanks for that. However Mitra I urge you not to vote to repeal Ord 21:21:Chapter 193!!! Backing down now with so little fight will only make it harder next time.

Did you watch Judge Magnuson's hearing? The one that led to upholding the landlords preliminary injunction order? I did and I was shocked at how cavalierly he displayed his bias; he actually said he hadn't read the city's written appeal; he asked whether an implementation committee had even been appointed and met, when that was in the written appeal; and he made it clear in side talk with the landlords' attorney that he had saved a lot of money when he moved out of St Paul and into a suburb. And this is the judge who said that he was finding for the landlords because it was his opinion that when the appeal finally goes to court, those judges will not find for the City of St Paul!!!

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As you said in the first reading of the effort to repeal this ordinance, "None of us can back down from our responsibility to continue fighting for renters in any avenue, even as that battle presents new fronts." SO PLEASE DONT BACK DOWN NOW.

I heard one argument for appeal is the expense of paying lawyers. Please consult with lawyers on your implementation committee to find lawyers who will work pro bono for this good cause as a case of civil rights, one that affects BIPOC people the most.

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Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Elaine Tarone

2163 Carter Ave Saint Paul, MN 55108-1710 [eetarone@gmail.com](mailto:eetarone@gmail.com)

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Sincerely,

Sincerely,

April Mootz

1283 Van Buren Ave Saint Paul, MN 55104-2044 [april.mootz@outlook.com](mailto:april.mootz@outlook.com)

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Hi Council,

It's Tom Basgen, Highland resident, local Oaf, forewarning: I'm not happy with you. Do not repeal the tenant protections. My expectation for you is to use the city's money and lawyers to protect our interests from some dusty ass judge appointed by Regan and a pack of greedy landlords who can't stomach the slightest obligation when it comes to their responsibilities of maintaining the places people live in this town. Get the lawyers, kick their asses in court or at least go down swinging.

Think of it this way, Rent control is likely gonna be on the ballot in the fall. What happens if it wins and you've voted to repeal these tenant protections? It would hang on you like an albatross in 2023, and that's something I can personally guarantee because I'll be the guy reminding everyone with ears about it. If you aren't planning on running in 2023, feel free to tell me to pound sand cause I have absolutely no power over you and you're free to do as you please. God speed and good luck in retirement.

Before you lecture me about my manners in a reply, yes, I am aware, but these tenant protections are like bottom of the barrel bargain wins for renters, so I'm a bit furious to be watching y'all flinch like kicked dogs on this.

Your friend and neighbor,  
Tom Basgen  
612-360-9506

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Sincerely,

Sincerely,  
Faith Dietz

1414 Van Buren Ave Saint Paul, MN 55104-1928 [dietzstuff4@gmail.com](mailto:dietzstuff4@gmail.com)

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I know that you care about St Paul renters! Thank you for all your work supporting us, and I know you've been in this fight for a long time. Be assured that I am also contacting your colleagues.

I rent with my partner in a Triplex in Midway. I am also a social worker who works on an Assertive Community Treatment team with a population that experiences high rates of homelessness. One woman who had been living in shelter finally found a landlord that would rent a room to her. She faces many barriers to finding dignified housing due to criminal background, eviction, and poor credit. For a room and shared spaces with strangers, she pays \$650 a month, which is more than I do for my half of rent! There are mice and the front door doesn't latch. The landlord charges rent so high because...she can. I try to advocate for the client and ended up filling holes with foam filler myself! Sometimes I just feel so angry and hopeless.

Please continue to support renters and the most vulnerable to be able to stay in their homes!! Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kathleen Roche

1482 Edmund Ave # 1 Saint Paul, MN 55104-2409 [karoche4@gmail.com](mailto:karoche4@gmail.com)

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Dear Council Member,

Rushing to repeal the Safe Tenant Protections is wrong for many reasons.

First, it will make the unfortunate primary ruling by Judge Magnuson more important.

Second, repealing this ordinance does not guarantee that you won't be in the same place with the same judge on a new ordinance.

Third it will not save money, the landlords will sue again.

Fourth, it will not get us protections any sooner.

Minneapolis passed legislation like this, currently in front of the circuit court. Table the repeal until the circuit court rules. Ask the judge to stay the lawsuit until then. This will give you, Council Members & the community time to develop a joint proposal that will avoid tenant screening but include other protections.

Thank you for your attention.

Janet Dunnwald Lageson  
1372 Keston St.  
St. Paul, MN 55108  
651-472-2914



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Sincerely,

Sincerely,  
Carolyn Szczepanski  
427 Herschel St Saint Paul, MN 55104-3604

Same email sent by:

Kayla Battles  
1486 Sheldon St Saint Paul, MN 55108-2323

Public comment received by Ward 4 office on Ord 21-21 Repealing Chapter 193 of the Legislative Code related to Tenant Protections

Cheyenne January  
765 Raymond Ave Apt 305 Saint Paul, MN 55114-1526

Faith Dietz  
1414 Van Buren Ave Saint Paul, MN 55104-1928

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Dear Council Member Mitra Jalali,

As a Saint Paul renter, I'm writing to strongly oppose the repeal of the SAFE Housing tenant protections ordinance (Ord 21:21: Chapter 193 of the Legislative Code related to Tenant Protection).

I've been a renter almost my entire life. But because of a lack of renter protections in cities throughout Minnesota, my family moved frequently, even sometimes finding ourselves houseless, my family of 6 living in friends' basements or spare rooms. Unattainable credit and income requirements, unsustainable rent hikes, predatory deposit policies - all of these contributed to a lack of stability and dignified, safe housing growing up. This also meant that I frequently changed schools, presenting barriers to education and social stability. Always struggling to keep up with rent (and new deposits when rent hikes meant moving again) meant we were also often food insecure.

As an adult, I've stayed a renter, partly because student loan debt and a lack of generational wealth in my Black and Indigenous family limited my financial ability to buy a home, but partly because I believe strongly in the benefits of a strong rental infrastructure for a community with rich and diverse backgrounds. From intrepid entrepreneurs who bring new businesses to Saint Paul even if it's a choice between starting a business or buying a home, to racially diverse individuals who don't have generational wealth to fall back on but want to build stable lives in Saint Paul, to college grads who have anywhere from 5-35 years of loan repayments before they can think of buying, to folks working diligently at jobs that barely pay enough to live, let alone save - these folks all belong in and enrich Saint Paul.

I've rented in Saint Paul since 2006, and while I'm proud to say that situation is a lot more stable for me as an adult, a lot of that increased stability is due to 8 years of higher education - which only eventually opened career options after several years working as a barista while I freelanced to build the necessary experience, and which left me with enough student loan debt to make three down-payments on a home. I'm 33 now, and still a few years from starting to save toward a down payment.

Renting has literally been the only viable option for me and many like me. Making renting an accessible, reliable, sustainable, and stable way of living in Saint Paul is critical to so many who don't have generational wealth due to systemic racial inequalities, who come from experiences of poverty and houselessness, who don't have college education and work jobs that don't pay enough to build wealth - or who DO have a college education and have too much debt to buy a home.

Passing the SAFE Housing Tenant Protections Ordinance was a bold and essential step in the right direction - but if repealed, it's an empty step that leaves Saint Paul residents back where we started, our stability and livelihoods at risk from volatility in the rental market, new housing developments with predominantly market rate or above availability, and pressure from predatory landlords. The protections offered by this ordinance have countless precedents across the nation. This piece of legislation, while deeply meaningful to renters in St. Paul, is not outlandish or revolutionary. It is a slate of proven, court-tested, common-sense protections that lay the groundwork for renters to put down roots and flourish in our communities.

A vote to repeal the SAFE Housing ordinance is a vote to abandon our city's renters at this pivotal moment. Oppose the repeal of the ordinance, and delay the vote on the repeal until the case against Minneapolis' similar measures is decided. We need a clear path forward to protecting tenants rights,

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and repealing right now would be premature and dangerous. Protect this important legislation and help ensure that St. Paul lives up to its name as “the most livable city in America”.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Taylor Hill

629 Lexington Pkwy N Saint Paul, MN 55104-2021 [quoteradar@gmail.com](mailto:quoteradar@gmail.com)