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On February 28th, the Brooklyn Center City Council passed a much-needed tenant protection ordinance by a vote of 3 to 2. This impactful decision comes after months of advocacy by local tenant organizers, ACER Housing Organizers, and Housing Advocacy groups.

Mayor Mike Elliott, Councilmembers Marquita Butler, and April Graves voted in favor of the ordinance, with Councilmembers Dan Ryan and Kris Lawrence-Anderson voting against the measure. The ordinance amends the City Code to require a 30-day pre-eviction notice and establishes “Just Cause” criteria for lease non-renewals;

The ordinance requires an owner of an affordable housing unit to provide written notice to a tenant at least 30 days prior to filing an eviction based on non-payment of rent or material breach of a lease; the ordinance also requires an owner of an affordable housing unit not to issue a notice of nonrenewal of tenancy unless the owner is able to establish "Just Cause" such as Non-payment of Rent, Building Demolishment, or other reasonable criteria. The detailed language of the ordinance can be viewed [here](#).

A number of groups have been involved in advocating for these legal protections, including local tenant groups in apartment communities such as Georgetown Park Townhomes. Brooklyn Center Tenants have organized to tackle housing instability. Tenants took a stand against predatory and abusive actions practiced by property owners such as using evictions and lease non-renewals to retaliate against tenants who use rental assistance or advocate for better management practices. Tenants advocated for their right to safe, affordable, and stable housing by testifying before the Brooklyn Center Housing Commission and the Brooklyn Center City Council, bringing attention to how adequate notice before eviction and Just Cause lease non-renewals would help them stay housed. Certainly, this ordinance could not have been passed without the tireless efforts of local tenants.

“I really believe this ordinance was made possible by the tenants' hard work. [Tenants] were brave enough to risk retaliation from their landlords every time they spoke up for themselves and their neighbors,” says ACER Housing Organizer Fadumo Mohamed.

“I also really appreciate the support of community members who are homeowners and landlords. Even though they didn't have an obvious interest in renters' well-being, they still stepped up to support their neighbors. Lastly, this ordinance



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was made possible by elected officials who prioritize the vulnerable people who they represent.” —Fadumo Mohamed, ACER Housing Organizer

“At a time when housing instability continues to be a huge crisis in our nation, with the state of Minnesota leading in disparate impacts, this is a much-needed first step in stemming the tide. Brooklyn Center has led the State in taking a much-needed bold step in protecting tenants’ rights—which in turn [will result] in stabilizing our whole community. We hope to see other cities follow suit, and call on our legislators to support our local governments’ efforts by passing the housing stabilization and investments proposals that are before them this legislative session. The future of our state depends on them.” — Nelima Sitati Munene, Executive Director of ACER

The work of housing organizers should also be commended. ACER is appreciative of the Attorneys and organizers at Home Line and the Housing Justice Center who provided their expertise and support; these legal advocacy partners informed tenants, housing organizers, and Councilmembers on the legality of the ordinance as well as its ability to protect renters. They made it clear to the public the legal strength of the ordinances in relation to local, State, and Federal laws. The work of all housing partners to support this ordinance is deeply respected and appreciated.

While ACER recognizes that there is more work to be done, especially in anticipation of a legal challenge to the ordinance by property owners, we remain committed to advancing housing justice in our communities. Currently, ACER is focusing on educating Brooklyn Center residents about what the ordinance means for their community.

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