

August 18, 2016

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The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 2819 (Chiu) – Urge Signature

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center (CWLC), we are writing to urge your signature on AB 2819, which would reform the California Code of Civil Procedure to protect the privacy, credit, and reputation of innocent tenants who are involved in eviction lawsuits. This bill will safeguard the ability of these tenants and their families to secure safe and affordable housing.

Under current law, if a tenant does not prevail in an eviction lawsuit within 60 days, all court records regarding the case become public, regardless of whether the tenant ultimately prevails. Tenant screening companies collect and publish the information, which then appears on the tenant's credit report and on landlords' blacklists for up to seven years.

The current law punishes innocent tenants by making their records public even when the tenant has settled, secured a dismissal of their case, or won after trial, but has done so after the 60-day deadline has passed. As it is not uncommon for eviction cases to take more than 60 days to process in cities like Los Angeles, and because some tenants are not given proper notice of the eviction lawsuit within that time, the current law unfairly puts innocent tenants on a blacklist. These tenants may consequently be rejected for all available rental housing.

AB 2819 would keep tenant records private unless and until the landlord prevails, whether that is before or after the 60-day mark. The legislation would also ensure that landlords can continue to access the information they need when making rental decisions and would build on California's efforts to promote fair access to court records.

Since its founding in 1989, CWLC has worked to advance the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education. CWLC places particular emphasis on low-income women and families, including ensuring access to safe and affordable housing.

CWLC urges your signature on AB 2819, which would protect the rights of innocent tenants across California, and ensure that they continue to have fair access to affordable housing for themselves and their families.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Executive Director