**Support HF 2479 Early Lease Termination for Violent Crime Victims**

Please support HF 2479, allowing victims of violent crime to terminate a lease early if they provide their landlord, written notice and documentation of harm. Currently 32 states have adopted this sensible policy.

Allowing early termination of a lease for victims of violence reduces a major economic barrier and burden to seeking safety for domestic abuse victims and removes a major barrier to healing for victims who want to leave a home where a violent crime occurred. It also helps prevent eviction by enabling crime victims to remain in good standing with landlords and avoiding an eviction record removes an enormous barrier to obtaining housing and economic stability.

Gender violence remains persistently prevalent regardless of income. Although low-income victims face unique challenges, domestic and sexual abuse often cause victims who were not previously low-income, to experience poverty. For victims of domestic abuse- physical violence is common, but economic abuse is more pervasive, often inflicts longer-lasting harm, and remains one of the most powerful methods of keeping a person trapped in an abusive relationship or trapped in poverty when they leave. Coercive partners are acutely aware of the link between a victim’s financial independence and access to safety and go to great lengths to sabotage a partner’s job, destroy credit history, or steal paychecks and financial assets.

Early lease termination mitigates the economic cost of seeking safety or healing from a violent crime. Many domestic violence victims remain trapped in dangerous relationships they wish to leave because they cannot afford to pay rent for the remainder of their lease and cannot afford the risk and economic consequences of getting evicted. And many victims of sexual violence or survivors of homicide remain trapped in trauma because they cannot afford to leave their home for the same reasons.

Early lease termination enhances economic security by helping survivors avoid eviction which is a major barrier to housing access. For victims who leave a relationship and/or leave a home where the violent crime occurred, eviction for nonpayment of rent is frequently the result of being unable to continue paying rent for a home where they can no longer safely live.Escaping abuse and trauma generally means losing housing and economic security as well as the means to regain it.

The economic impact of escaping violence routinely makes it difficult to escape poverty. This bill would provide meaningful support to crime victims by reducing an economic barrier to seeking safety and healing…and to accessing housing and economic stability.

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