



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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The Honorable Justices of the Supreme Court
Supreme Court of Texas
201 W 14th St STE 104
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Justices of the Supreme Court of Texas,

I write today to urge you to reinstate a 90-day suspension of eviction hearings in order to help contain the current surge of COVID-19 cases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has rightfully warned that the next few months could be “the most difficult in the public health history of this nation.”

As you are aware, the CDC’s eviction moratorium is set to expire on December 31. While reinstatement of the CDC moratorium is possible, the vulnerable citizens of Texas need another layer of protection to ensure a more robust system of protection. A recent study by the University of California, Los Angeles, University of California, San Francisco, Johns Hopkins University, Boston University and Wake Forest University School of Law found that “evictions may accelerate COVID-19 transmission by increasing household crowding and decreasing individuals’ ability to comply with social distancing directives.”

The study found that as many as 433,700 excess cases of COVID and 10,700 additional deaths were caused by states lifting their eviction moratoriums between March and September, raising concerns about what will happen when the CDC ban lapses at the end of December. The researchers concluded that “lifting eviction moratoriums was associated with increased COVID-19 incidence and mortality, supporting the public health rationale for use of eviction moratoriums to prevent the spread of COVID-19.”

Come January, thousands of Texans could literally be left out in the cold. Without eviction moratoriums in place, the situation could become untenable. The looming public health crisis could metastasize into an even greater calamity without further action. I implore you to reinstate the suspension of eviction hearings.

Sincerely,

Sylvester Turner
Mayor