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Sixteen Million Renter Households At Risk of Eviction; Eleven Million Could Be Served With Eviction Filings Over Next Four Months

Organizers Press For Immediate Congressional Action in Wake of COVID-19

Over sixteen million renter households (or nearly 40 million individual renters) are at risk of eviction, and more than eleven million renter households could be served with eviction papers over the next four months, according to a [new interactive tool](#) by global advisory firm Stout Risius Ross, LLC (“Stout”). In contrast, prior to the pandemic, roughly 2.3 million typically received eviction papers in an entire year, according to the [Eviction Lab](#). The tool also suggests that more than 2 million evictions may be filed in each of August and September.

The tool, based on Census survey and other data, allows users to review national or state-by-state data about renter confidence in the ability to make rent, an estimate of the expected number of evictions that may be filed in the months ahead, and the amount of rental relief that may be necessary to stabilize these households. The tool will be updated with new predictions as new Census survey data is released each week.

The figure of sixteen million renter households at risk of eviction is consistent with other [recent reports](#), while the estimate of ten million renter households that could be served with eviction papers over the next four months assumes that the government does not act to provide comprehensive rent relief or a nationwide moratorium.

Many COVID-19 hotspots, such as Texas and Louisiana, have more households at risk of eviction than the national average yet are [allowing evictions to proceed](#).

National housing advocates argued the numbers required immediate action.

“This data shows us that all the terms people have been using to describe what’s coming – ‘cliff’, ‘tsunami’, ‘avalanche’ and so on – might actually be an understatement,” said **John Pollock, Coordinator of the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel**. “The only reason we haven’t already seen two million eviction filings is because of all the CARES Act relief that at this point is either going or gone.” He pointed to the federal eviction moratorium covering one-fourth of all rental properties, the expanded unemployment payments, and the one-time stimulus payments as examples of expiring or expired protections.

Pollock added that tenant representation is another necessary protection, and that while [five cities](#) have established a right to counsel for tenants facing eviction, fewer than 10 percent of tenants on average are represented everywhere else – despite landlords being represented more than 90 percent of the time. Conversely, a [study](#) of New York City’s right to counsel found that 84 percent of tenants with counsel

are staying in their homes, and eviction filings are down over 30 percent. [News reports](#) have highlighted how countless tenants have been illegally evicted despite moratoria that were in place.

“We need a moratorium to stop the bleeding, rent relief to close the wound, and funding for tenant representation to ensure it can heal without getting infected,” Pollock said.

Data analyzed by the Stout tool also reveals significant racial disparities: since early May, over 50 percent of Black tenants and over 40 percent of Latinx renters consistently have had little to no confidence that they can make rent, compared to around 20 percent of white renters. And these disparities exist in a COVID-19 housing market already tainted with discrimination: an analysis by the [Los Angeles Times](#) found that a disproportionate number of illegal evictions in Los Angeles in the past few months have been focused on predominantly Black and Latinx neighborhoods.

Diane Yentel, the President and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, said, “This tool makes clear that without immediate federal action, millions of renters will lose their homes in the coming months. Evicting families during a pandemic is not only cruel and immoral – it is shortsighted and senseless. Evictions risk lives, drive families deeper into poverty, further burden hospitals, and make it more difficult for the country to contain the virus. Evictions are preventable, but we are running out of time. Congress must immediately implement a national moratorium on evictions for the duration of the pandemic, and provide at least \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance to keep renters stably housed.”

Eric Dunn, the Director of Litigation for the National Housing Law Project, said, “We’ve already seen record unemployment claims and cars lined up for incredible distances at food banks—now we’d be looking at homelessness on a level that’s difficult to really conceive. Evictions and displacements on that scale threatens to substantially undo what little progress we have made toward ending residential segregation and building more inclusive communities in the U.S.”

Andrew Scherer, New York Law School Professor and Policy Director of the NYLS Impact Center for Public Interest Law, said, “This enormously useful tool demonstrates in stark relief the magnitude of the looming catastrophe we face in evictions and homelessness if government doesn’t act to protect vulnerable renters through rent relief, moratoria on evictions and a right to counsel. The data gathered by renowned experts Stout Risius and Ross is a wake-up call that must not be ignored.”

Emily Benfer, Law Professor at Wake Forest University School of Law and co-creator of the COVID-19 Housing Policy Scorecard with the Eviction Lab at Princeton University, said, “At a time when sheltering in place is paramount to stabilizing the United States and controlling the pandemic, our country is on the brink of a housing crisis of unprecedented magnitude that could devastate the renters, property owners and the entire housing market. As this important tool demonstrates, failure to intervene will result in a humanitarian disaster of our own making.”

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The [National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel \(NCCRC\)](#) is staffed by the [Public Justice Center](#) and funded in part by foundations such as the JPB Foundation, ACTL Foundation, IATL Foundation, and Kresge Foundation. Founded in 2003, our mission is to encourage, support, and coordinate advocacy to expand recognition and implementation of a right to counsel for low-income people in civil cases involving basic human needs such as shelter, safety, sustenance, health, and child custody.