

STATE OF NEW YORK

10290--A

IN ASSEMBLY

April 8, 2020

Introduced by M. of A. DINOWITZ, SEAWRIGHT, EPSTEIN, LENTOL, SIMOTAS, JAFFEE, GOTTFRIED, ORTIZ, RAMOS, SIMON -- read once and referred to the Committee on Judiciary -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the real property actions and proceedings law, the real property law, and the civil practice law and rules, in relation to proceedings related to a tenant's default in the payment of rent between March 7, 2020 and a date six months after the expiration of the state COVID-19 disaster emergency

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "tenant
2 safe harbor act".
3 § 2. Subdivision 2 of section 711 of the real property actions and
4 proceedings law, as amended by section 12 of part M of chapter 36 of the
5 laws of 2019, is amended to read as follows:
6 2. The tenant has defaulted in the payment of rent, pursuant to the
7 agreement under which the premises are held, and a written demand of the
8 rent has been made with at least fourteen days' notice requiring, in the
9 alternative, the payment of the rent, or the possession of the premises,
10 has been served upon him or her as prescribed in section seven hundred
11 thirty-five of this article. Any person succeeding to the landlord's
12 interest in the premises may proceed under this subdivision for rent due
13 his or her predecessor in interest if he or she has a right thereto.
14 Where a tenant dies during the term of the lease and rent due has not
15 been paid and the apartment is occupied by a person with a claim to
16 possession, a proceeding may be commenced naming the occupants of the
17 apartment seeking a possessory judgment only as against the estate.
18 Entry of such a judgment shall be without prejudice to the possessory
19 claims of the occupants, and any warrant issued shall not be effective
20 as against the occupants. This subdivision shall not apply where a
21 tenant has defaulted in the payment of rent due between March seventh,
22 two thousand twenty and a date six months after the expiration of the
23 state disaster emergency, as such term is defined in section twenty of

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 the executive law, declared pursuant to executive order two hundred two
2 of two thousand twenty, as amended.

3 § 3. Subdivision 2 of section 747 of the real property actions and
4 proceedings law, as added by chapter 312 of the laws of 1962, is amended
5 to read as follows:

6 2. The judgment shall not bar an action to recover the possession of
7 real property. The judgment shall not bar an action, proceeding or coun-
8 terclaim, commenced or interposed within sixty days of entry of the
9 judgment, for affirmative equitable relief which was not sought by coun-
10 terclaim in the proceeding because of the limited jurisdiction of the
11 court. No judgment for possession shall be entered from rent owed
12 between March seventh, two thousand twenty and a date six months after
13 the expiration of the state disaster emergency, as such term is defined
14 in section twenty of the executive law, declared pursuant to executive
15 order two hundred two of two thousand twenty, as amended.

16 § 4. The real property actions and proceedings law is amended by
17 adding a new section 712 to read as follows:

18 § 712. Grounds where landlord-tenant relationship exists; special
19 proceedings for rent due during the COVID-19 pandemic. A tenant shall
20 include an occupant of one or more rooms in a rooming house or a resi-
21 dent, not including a transient occupant, of one or more rooms in a
22 hotel who has been in possession for thirty consecutive days or longer.
23 No tenant or lawful occupant of a premises shall be removed from
24 possession in a special proceeding maintained under this article upon
25 the grounds of this section. A special proceeding for a judgment of rent
26 due may be maintained where the tenant has defaulted in the payment of
27 rent, pursuant to the agreement under which the premises are held, where
28 such rent was due between March seventh, two thousand twenty and a date
29 six months after the expiration of the state disaster emergency, as that
30 term is defined in section twenty of the executive law, declared pursu-
31 ant to executive order two hundred two of two thousand twenty, as
32 amended, and a written demand of the rent has been made with at least
33 fourteen days' notice requiring the payment of the rent, served upon the
34 tenant as prescribed in section seven hundred thirty-five of this arti-
35 cle. Any person succeeding to the landlord's interest in the premises
36 may proceed under this section for rent due his or her predecessor in
37 interest for the time period specified above if he or she has a right
38 thereto.

39 § 5. Subdivisions 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 of section 223-b of the real prop-
40 erty law, as amended by section 2 of part M of chapter 36 of the laws of
41 2019, are amended to read as follows:

42 1. No landlord of premises or units to which this section is applica-
43 ble shall serve a notice to quit upon any tenant or commence any action
44 to recover real property or summary proceeding to recover possession of
45 real property in retaliation for:

46 a. A good faith complaint, by or in behalf of the tenant, to the land-
47 lord, the landlord's agent or a governmental authority of the landlord's
48 alleged violation of any health or safety law, regulation, code, or
49 ordinance, the warranty of habitability under section two hundred thir-
50 ty-five-b of this article, the duty to repair under sections seventy-
51 eight, seventy-nine, and eighty of the multiple dwelling law or section
52 one hundred seventy-four of the multiple residence law, or any law or
53 regulation which has as its objective the regulation of premises used
54 for dwelling purposes or which pertains to the offense of rent gouging
55 in the third, second or first degree; or

1 b. Actions taken in good faith, by or in behalf of the tenant, to
2 secure or enforce any rights under the lease or rental agreement, the
3 warranty of habitability under section two hundred thirty-five-b of this
4 article, the duty to repair under sections seventy-eight, seventy-nine,
5 and eighty of the multiple dwelling law or section one hundred seventy-
6 four of the multiple residence law, or under any other law of the state
7 of New York, or of its governmental subdivisions, or of the United
8 States which has as its objective the regulation of premises used for
9 dwelling purposes or which pertains to the offense of rent gouging in
10 the third, second or first degree; ~~or~~

11 c. The tenant's participation in the activities of a tenant's organ-
12 ization; or

13 d. The tenant's failure to pay all or a portion of rent due between
14 March seventh, two thousand twenty and a date six months after the expi-
15 ration of the state disaster emergency, as that term is defined in
16 section twenty of the executive law, declared pursuant to executive
17 order two hundred two of two thousand twenty, as amended.

18 2. No landlord of premises or units to which this section is applica-
19 ble or such landlord's agent shall substantially alter the terms of the
20 tenancy in retaliation for any actions set forth in paragraphs a, b,
21 ~~and~~ c, and d of subdivision one of this section. Substantial alter-
22 ation shall include, but is not limited to, the refusal to continue a
23 tenancy of the tenant, upon expiration of the tenant's lease, to renew
24 the lease or offer a new lease, or offering a new lease with an unrea-
25 sonable rent increase; provided, however, that a landlord shall not be
26 required under this section to offer a new lease or a lease renewal for
27 a term greater than one year.

28 4. In any action to recover real property or summary proceeding to
29 recover possession of real property, judgment shall be entered for the
30 tenant if the court finds that the landlord is acting in retaliation for
31 any action set forth in paragraphs a, b, ~~and~~ c, and d of subdivision
32 one of this section. Retaliation shall be asserted as an affirmative
33 defense in such action or proceeding. The tenant shall not be relieved
34 of the obligation to pay any rent for which he is otherwise liable.

35 5. In an action or proceeding instituted against a tenant of premises
36 or a unit to which this section is applicable, a rebuttable presumption
37 that the landlord is acting in retaliation shall be created if the
38 tenant establishes that the landlord served a notice to quit, or insti-
39 tuted an action or proceeding to recover possession, or attempted to
40 substantially alter the terms of the tenancy, within one year after:

41 a. A good faith complaint was made, by or in behalf of the tenant, to
42 the landlord, the landlord's agent or a governmental authority of the
43 landlord's violation of any health or safety law, regulation, code, or
44 ordinance, the warranty of habitability under section two hundred thir-
45 ty-five-b of this article, the duty to repair under sections seventy-
46 eight, seventy-nine, and eighty of the multiple dwelling law or section
47 one hundred seventy-four of the multiple residence law, or any law or
48 regulation which has as its objective the regulation of premises used
49 for dwelling purposes or which pertains to the offense of rent gouging
50 in the third, second or first degree; or

51 b. The tenant in good faith took action to secure or enforce against
52 the landlord or his agents any rights under the lease or rental agree-
53 ment, the warranty of habitability under section two hundred thirty-
54 five-b of this article, the duty to repair under sections seventy-eight,
55 seventy-nine, and eighty of the multiple dwelling law or section one
56 hundred seventy-four of the multiple residence law, or under any other

1 law of the state of New York, or of its governmental subdivisions, or of
2 the United States which has as its objective the regulation of premises
3 used for dwelling purposes or which pertains to the offense of rent
4 gouging in the third, second or first degree.

5 c. Judgment under subdivision three or four of this section was
6 entered for the tenant in a previous action between the parties; or an
7 inspection was made, an order was entered, or other action was taken as
8 a result of a complaint or act described in paragraph a or b of this
9 subdivision.

10 d. The tenant failed to pay all or a portion of rent due between March
11 seventh, two thousand twenty and a date six months after the expiration
12 of the state disaster emergency, as that term is defined in section
13 twenty of the executive law, declared pursuant to executive order two
14 hundred two of two thousand twenty, as amended.

15 The effect of the presumption shall be to require the landlord to
16 establish a non-retaliatory motive for his acts by a preponderance of
17 the evidence.

18 6. This section shall apply to all rental residential premises except
19 owner-occupied dwellings with less than four units. However, its
20 provisions, other than paragraph d of subdivision one of this section,
21 shall not be given effect in any case in which it is established that
22 the condition from which the complaint or action arose was caused by the
23 tenant, a member of the tenant's household, or a guest of the tenant.
24 Nor shall it apply in a case where a tenancy was terminated pursuant to
25 the terms of a lease as a result of a bona fide transfer of ownership.

26 § 6. Subdivision (b) of section 5231 of the civil practice law and
27 rules, as amended by chapter 575 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read
28 as follows:

29 (b) Issuance. Where a judgment debtor is receiving or will receive
30 money from any source, an income execution for installments therefrom of
31 not more than ten percent thereof may be issued and delivered to the
32 sheriff of the county in which the judgment debtor resides or, where the
33 judgment debtor is a non-resident, the county in which he is employed;
34 provided, however, that (i) no amount shall be withheld from the judg-
35 ment debtor's earnings pursuant to an income execution for any week
36 unless the disposable earnings of the judgment debtor for that week
37 exceed the greater of thirty times the federal minimum hourly wage
38 prescribed in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 or thirty times the
39 state minimum hourly wage prescribed in section six hundred fifty-two of
40 the labor law as in effect at the time the earnings are payable; (ii)
41 except as provided in paragraph (iii) of this subdivision, the amount
42 withheld from the judgment debtor's earnings pursuant to an income
43 execution for any week shall not exceed twenty-five percent of the
44 disposable earnings of the judgment debtor for that week, or, the amount
45 by which the disposable earnings of the judgment debtor for that week
46 exceed the greater of thirty times the federal minimum hourly wage
47 prescribed by the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 or thirty times the
48 state minimum hourly wage prescribed in section six hundred fifty-two of
49 the labor law as in effect at the time the earnings are payable, which-
50 ever is less; (iii) where the income execution is for a judgment of
51 residential rent due between March seventh, two thousand twenty and a
52 date six months after the expiration of the state disaster emergency, as
53 that term is defined in section twenty of the executive law, declared
54 pursuant to executive order two hundred two of two thousand twenty, as
55 amended, the amount withheld from the judgment debtor's earnings pursu-
56 ant to an income execution for any week shall not exceed ten percent of

1 the disposable earnings of the judgment debtor for that week, or, the
2 amount by which the disposable earnings of the judgment debtor for that
3 week exceed the greater of thirty times the federal minimum hourly wage
4 prescribed by the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 or thirty times the
5 state minimum hourly wage prescribed in section six hundred fifty-two of
6 the labor law as in effect at the time the earnings are payable, which-
7 ever is less; (iv) if the earnings of the judgment debtor are also
8 subject to deductions for alimony, support or maintenance for family
9 members or former spouses pursuant to section five thousand two hundred
10 forty-one or section five thousand two hundred forty-two of this arti-
11 cle, the amount withheld from the judgment debtor's earnings pursuant to
12 this section shall not exceed the amount by which twenty-five percent of
13 the disposable earnings of the judgment debtor for that week exceeds the
14 amount deducted from the judgment debtor's earnings in accordance with
15 section five thousand two hundred forty-one or section five thousand two
16 hundred forty-two of this article. Nothing in this section shall be
17 construed to modify, abrogate, impair, or affect any exemption from the
18 satisfaction of a money judgment otherwise granted by law.
19 § 7. This act shall take effect immediately.