

# STATE OF NEW YORK

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5430

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

## IN SENATE

March 4, 2021

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Introduced by Sen. PARKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Housing, Construction and Community Development

AN ACT to amend the real property actions and proceedings law, in relation to requiring that certain public housing authorities establish an innocent tenant protection act applicable to tenants of public and federally assisted housing

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

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature finds that it is imper-  
2 ative that the forty-nine public housing authorities in the state  
3 provide that any criminal activities that threaten the health, safety or  
4 right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises, engaged in by a tenant of  
5 public or federally assisted housing, and members of the tenants' house-  
6 hold, or any guest or other person under the tenants' control, shall be  
7 cause for termination of tenancy. The legislature further finds that law  
8 abiding tenants are vulnerable to "One-Strike" evictions given the poli-  
9 cy's breadth and the United States Supreme Court's decision in United  
10 States Department of Housing and Urban Development v. Davis. Anyone who  
11 leases public or assisted housing is a potential target of "One-Strike"  
12 evictions. It is of little consequence that a tenant may be law abiding,  
13 despise drug activity or have made his or her home a drug-free environ-  
14 ment. Any link to guest or family members involved in drug activity on  
15 or off the public housing premises can trigger eviction. Therefore the  
16 legislature finds the adoption of an innocent tenant protection act  
17 vital to law abiding tenants of public and federally assisted housing in  
18 New York state.

19 § 2. The real property actions and proceedings law is amended by  
20 adding a new section 711-a to read as follows:

21 § 711-a. Innocent tenant protection. 1. Each public housing authority  
22 and owners of federally assisted housing shall utilize leases which

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

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1 provide that any criminal activity that threatens the health, safety or  
2 right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises, engaged in by a public  
3 housing or federally assisted housing tenant or any drug related crimi-  
4 nal activity on or off such premises engaged in by a public housing or  
5 federally assisted housing tenant, any member of the tenant's household,  
6 or any guest or other person under the tenant's control, shall be cause  
7 for termination, except that no tenancy of an innocent lessee shall be  
8 terminated pursuant to this section.

9 2. The burden of proof shall be on the government to establish by a  
10 preponderance of the evidence that such tenant engaged in criminal  
11 activity as described in subdivision one of this section.

12 3. For purposes of this section the term "innocent lessee" means a  
13 lessee who:

14 (a) did not know of the criminal activity giving rise to the possible  
15 termination of tenancy; or

16 (b) upon hearing of the conduct giving rise to the possible termi-  
17 nation of the tenancy, did all that reasonably could be expected under  
18 the circumstances to terminate the criminal activity. For purposes of  
19 this subdivision, ways in which a person may show that such person did  
20 all that reasonably could be expected may include demonstrating that  
21 such person, to the extent allowed by law: (i) gave timely notice to an  
22 appropriate law enforcement agency of information that led the tenant to  
23 know the conduct giving rise to a possible termination of tenancy would  
24 occur or had occurred; or (ii) in a timely fashion revoked or made a  
25 good faith attempt to revoke permission for those engaging in such  
26 conduct to use the property, or took reasonable actions in consultation  
27 with a law enforcement agency to discourage or prevent the illegal use  
28 of the property.

29 4. A tenant is not required by subdivision three of this section to  
30 take steps that the person reasonably believes would be likely to  
31 subject any person, other than the person whose conduct gave rise to the  
32 possible termination of tenancy, to physical danger.

33 § 3. (a) Within six months of the effective date of this act and after  
34 granting notice and an opportunity to comment to affected tenants, the  
35 executive directors of the public housing authorities and owners of  
36 federally assisted housing shall review the drug-related eviction proce-  
37 dures of all jurisdictions having federally subsidized units for the  
38 purpose of determining whether procedures meet state due process stand-  
39 ards.

40 (b) Upon conclusion of the review mandated by subdivision (a) of this  
41 section, if the executive directors of public housing authorities or the  
42 owners of federally assisted housing determine that due process stand-  
43 ards are met for a jurisdiction, such directors and owners shall issue  
44 such jurisdiction a waiver of the procedure that mandates an administra-  
45 tive grievance hearing.

46 (c) Within sixty days of the completion of the review mandated by  
47 subdivision (a) of this section, the executive directors of the public  
48 housing authorities and owners of federally assisted housing shall  
49 report to the mayors in those cities where such housing authorities and  
50 owners are under the auspices of that government body or county, or  
51 state body of government, the findings of the review including all waiv-  
52 ers granted in accordance with subdivision (b) of this section. The  
53 tenancy of a tenant of a public housing authority or federally assisted  
54 housing shall not be terminated without cause and without reason there-  
55 for given to said tenant in writing prior to such housing authority

1 and/or federally assisted housing filing an action for summary process  
2 or seeking an injunction.  
3 § 4. This act shall take effect on the thirtieth day after it shall  
4 have become a law.