

File ID number: 19-4770 Just Housing Amendment Rules

I'm submitting written testimony for tomorrow's meeting. I'm also registering in advance as a speaker.

My name is Michael Rabbitt. I'm a founding member of Neighbors for Affordable Housing. I'm here today as a proud supporter of the Just Housing amendment and to call for approval of the final set of rules before this committee.

Having a parent who was incarcerated, I understand the impacts of incarceration on people and their families. And for formerly incarcerated people and their families – people trying to turn their lives around – there must be equitable access to secure and affordable housing.

I respect the commissioners on this committee whose intent is to institute rules that are in alignment with the ordinance and do not have unintended consequences. And I understand that this is complicated. But we cannot allow perfection to be the enemy of good, or of justice. We cannot obsess over hypotheticals or outliers that do not support the spirit of the ordinance, or do not promote the common good.

I'm particularly concerned with the recent push to lengthen the lookback period to 7 years. With the lookback period having been a question of 3 versus 5 years, suddenly a lengthier, tiered alternative is being pressed by realtors and has become an unacceptable obstacle to the passage of the rules.

Let's not allow the look back period to be used as the modern-day version of poll taxes.

The Board should reject an unfair and cumbersome lookback period and accept the three-year period in the proposed rules. With a goal of reducing complexity, and with simplification as a guiding principle, it makes sense to have a uniform period that is easier to administer and is consistent with CHA and HACC rules.

Much has been done to reach a fair compromise on these rules, including multiple delays of the effective date. There cannot be any further delays. We must ensure the law goes into effect at the end of the year.

People in need are waiting. Delays have real impacts on peoples' lives. Justice delayed is justice denied. It is time for just housing.

Michael Rabbitt
6520 N Ponchartrain Blvd
Chicago, IL 60646
Tel: 312-909-2759