



EDITORIAL- AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

Three days, and you're out

Renters deserve relief in the foreclosure crisis

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As the foreclosure crisis continues, a largely forgotten side of the problem is coming to light. Among those affected are renters. As detailed by Beacon Journal staff writer Rick Armon on Saturday, families can face abrupt eviction even if they have been paying their rent. Armon explored the disruption caused to a Springfield Township family given just 10 days' notice this past September.

Under existing Ohio law, three days is all that is required, hardly enough time to make necessary arrangements. A thorough study of Summit County has been not yet been done, but research in Cuyahoga and Franklin counties indicates that from 29 percent to 40 percent of foreclosures involve renters.

Fortunately, the Democratic majority in the Ohio House is moving to fix the problem with a bill that would ensure renters get more notice. Backed by state Reps. Ted Celeste of Grandview Heights and Mike Foley of Cleveland, the relatively straightforward legislation would bring a much needed measure of communication between landlords and renters.

Landlords would have to tell prospective tenants if a property is in foreclosure. A 21-day notice would be required for existing tenants. Once a court approves a sale of a rental property, all agreements would be converted to a monthly basis, in effect giving at least 30 days' notice.

With complaints from evicted renters on the rise, disclosure laws have been introduced or passed in 18 states. In the Ohio House, Democrats have placed the matter high on their legislative agenda, where it should be for the coming session.

There is much work to be done in Columbus and Washington to deal with the foreclosure problem. At the Statehouse, House Democrats have a measure that would impose a moratorium on home foreclosures and give judges the power to modify mortgages. While discussion continues, Ohio should act quickly to give renters a larger window to cope with a problem not of their own making.

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