

# Rochester City Council OKs eviction protection law

**Kerria Weaver**

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Cheers erupted throughout the Rochester City Council chambers as the council passed the Good Cause Eviction Protections law Tuesday night.

City Council voted 7-2 to opt into the law that will protect over 100,000 Rochester tenants from predatory rent hikes and evictions that lack a cause beyond landlord profit.

This move makes Rochester the largest upstate city to adopt these protections.

**See EVICTION LAW, Page 5A**

# Eviction law

Continued from Page 1A

Rochester City Council President Miguel Meléndez Jr. expressed how the council took on the responsibility to investigate how the legislation could benefit Rochesterians. “I am proud of this body for ushering in legislation that will protect 64% of residents who rent throughout our city,” Meléndez said. “This is particularly important in communities within our city who have often been marginalized, specifically in the area of access to quality, affordable and stable housing.”

Rochester City Councilmember Mary Lupien mentioned how good cause is a vital step forward in addressing Rochester’s housing crisis, but said it is only the beginning. “To truly ensure access to quality, affordable housing and create stable, thriving neighborhoods, we must use every tool at our disposal,” Lupien said. “Stability is the foundation that opens doors to opportunity, giving our residents and neighborhoods a real chance to thrive.”

## Some on Council voted no to ‘good cause’ eviction law

Council Vice President LaShay Harris and Councilmember Michael Patterson voted no against the law. Both of them explained their position for being against good cause.

“It’s not going to lower anybody’s rent, it’s not going to create more housing in this community,” Patterson said. “The only way we’re going to get real stability in this community is to get more housing and the only way that’s going to happen is if we can actually get landlords to stop being fearful of renting to tenants.”

Harris agreed with Patterson and further explained her reasoning on being against the law.

“Look at all the cities that have passed good cause, the rents are still high, they are too high,” Harris said. “This is not a silver bullet to our housing crisis, it will ultimately increase the cost of rent in our market

where people are already struggling to pay rent.”

## How will good cause protect renters?

Good Cause Eviction Protections would require landlords to have a “good cause,” such as non-payment or violating the lease, to remove a tenant.

During the meeting, President Meléndez introduced an amendment to the bill that closed the LLC loophole by lowering the portfolio size exemption to one unit, which ensures protections apply to nearly all renters.

The council also passed three other proposals connected to good cause which includes establishing a task force to monitor the law’s implementation, launching a public education initiative to inform tenants of their rights and initiating a process to select an organization to assess the law’s efficacy.

Lisle Coleman, City-Wide Tenant Union of Rochester organizer, spoke of how she believes good cause will help to create beautiful and stable neighborhoods. “Over a hundred thousand tenants can now rest easy knowing their landlord can’t kick them out just because he wants more money,” Coleman said. “We are ready to use our new protections to fight for better conditions, stop rent hikes, and stand our ground against predatory landlords.”

## When will the protections go into effect?

The protections will go into effect for over 100,000 tenants citywide once signed into law by Rochester Mayor Malik Evans.

Until the law is signed, tenants are advised to stay in their homes, as state law requires landlords to provide 30 to 90 days’ notice for rent increases, non-renewals or evictions.

— *Kerria Weaver works as the Government and You reporter for the Democrat and Chronicle, with a focus on how government actions affect communities and neighborhoods in Rochester and in Monroe County. Get in touch at [kweaver@gannett.com](mailto:kweaver@gannett.com).*