



**Letter of Opposition from the
American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky**

To Members of the House of Representatives

Regarding Senate Bill 11

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Members of the House of Representatives:

The ACLU of Kentucky oppose SB 11 because it will hurt Kentuckians, especially right now. This bill will allow unscrupulous landlords to exploit and intimidate vulnerable tenants. This is especially troubling given that we are in the middle of a public health emergency making many Kentuckians especially vulnerable. Our nation and state are helping individuals during this trying time. Some cities are encouraging landlords to waive evictions to protect the public's health and to keep Kentuckians safe and housed. This bill does the opposite.

Senate Bill 11 will instill a fear in Kentuckians of not only losing their housing, but also going to jail. Our criminal legal system is already pushed beyond capacity. Our jails are dangerously overcrowded, forcing many incarcerated people to sleep on floors and suffer through dangerously unhygienic environments. We should not be creating legislation that will increase the number of incarcerated Kentuckians; we should be finding ways to care for of our fellow Kentuckians.

Every year there are speeches about reducing incarceration rates and the need to create fewer felony offenses. However, the General Assembly is yet again considering a bill that would increase incarceration rates and burden more Kentuckians with the life-long consequences of a felony conviction.

Additionally, Senate Bill 11 bill puts added strains on our prosecutors, judges, and other various stakeholders in the criminal legal system. Disputes between landlords and tenants should not be settled in the criminal system. These cases are cumbersome and will further clog our system. This law will impact Kentuckians who are simply accused of breaking the law even when they are innocent. Further, the most innocent among us – children – will be



negatively impacted by this measure if their parents lose housing or face incarceration.

Last, incarcerating someone puts more burden on tax payers. These matters can be settled in civil court. When the incarcerated individual gets out of jail, they will be burdened with court cost and fees, supervision fees and regulations, and many other hurdles.

We believe in accountability and making amends, but SB 11 is not the way to do it. We need to move toward a restorative justice approach instead of the usual punitive measures that we so often take. Do not punish the tax payers, the economy (because folks can't get a good job after a felony conviction), and the tenant's families. Now is not the time to make Kentuckians vulnerable to losing their homes or to incarceration.

Please vote no on Senate Bill 11.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you and your staff are safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Amanda Hall
Field Organizer, Smart Justice