

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE



SENATOR MICHAEL N. GIANARIS
12TH DISTRICT

April 8, 2020

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As leaders at every level of government endeavor to stem the spread of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, we must steel ourselves not only for the public health crisis that is upon us but also for the economic catastrophe right around the corner. The first wave of that humanitarian impact began April 1st, when rents came due for millions of New Yorkers.

Already, there are numerous reports of unscrupulous landlords pressuring tenants to pay rents with monies they simply do not have due to government-ordered shutdowns. Many renters are making real-time decisions about their housing situation that cannot wait for the crisis to be over. We must take serious action right away to keep our neighbors in their homes at this perilous time.

Despite the 90-day eviction moratorium you wisely established by executive order, three months of rent payments will eventually come due all at once. Those who do not have funds for April's rent will certainly not have the ability to pay three months worth of rent in July. The resulting wave of evictions and foreclosures would exacerbate a historically difficult time.

I recently introduced legislation that would address this crisis by providing immediate rent relief to residential tenants and small businesses. Additionally, it provides support for homeowners who would suffer financial hardship as a result of lost rental income. This proposal would be an important step toward delivering economic relief to New Yorkers in desperate need.

Fortunately, you have the authority as Governor to provide this critical relief by executive order without waiting for the Legislature to reconvene. You already effectively used this power in a number of situations related to the COVID-19 outbreak, and the rent crisis is another opportunity for swift executive action that would help millions. Respectfully, I urge you to issue such an executive order to help tenants as soon as possible.

The economic consequences of COVID-19 will be felt for years to come and the work of rebuilding New York will dominate policy-making in all branches of government for the foreseeable future. Your leadership in response to the public health component of the coronavirus outbreak is being held up as an example across the nation. Now is the time to take action to combat the housing and economic crises that are soon to follow. I stand ready to work with you in this regard in any way I could be helpful.

Sincerely,

Senator Michael Gianaris
Deputy Majority Leader