



**SHERIFF THOMAS DART**  
**Cook County Sheriff's Office**  
**Richard J. Daley Center**  
**50 Washington Street, Suite 704**  
**Chicago, Illinois 60602**

August 19, 2020

**Via Electronic Mail**

Governor J.B. Pritzker  
Office of the Illinois Governor  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

**Via Electronic Mail**

Chief Judge Timothy Evans  
Circuit Court of Cook County  
50 West Washington Street, Room 2600  
Richard J. Daley Center  
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Governor Pritzker and Chief Judge Evans:

Like you, I have been tremendously concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, not just on the health and safety of residents, but on the economic future of the entire community. The evictions moratorium set to expire on August 22nd has been a critical component of ensuring economic stability along with government efforts to aid both tenants and property owners.

Therefore, I am writing to urge you to extend the evictions moratorium—at least for long enough to allow for full distribution of Illinois, Cook County and City of Chicago assistance funds.

As the law enforcement official charged with enforcing evictions in Cook County, my office is on the frontlines of this crisis working with landlords and tenants. We have counselled hundreds of anxious residents and landlords and helped guide them to resources to help weather this crisis.

Based on national<sup>1</sup> and local<sup>2</sup> estimates, as many as a quarter of a million Cook County households may be at risk of eviction if the moratorium is not extended. Many of these individuals will be forced to stay with family or friends in crowded quarters, end up in shelters or become homeless—all of which increase exposure to COVID-19 for the individuals themselves and others in the community.

At the same time, many landlords are experiencing significant financial strain due to the pandemic as tenants have been unable to pay rent. Both groups are suffering unprecedented hardships. Ultimately everyone will be better

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<sup>1</sup> The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis: An Estimated 30-40 Million People in America Are at Risk, available at [https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/The\\_Eviction\\_Crisis\\_080720.pdf](https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/The_Eviction_Crisis_080720.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University, 2019 State of Rental Housing in Cook County, available at <https://www.housingstudies.org/releases/state-rental-2019/>

served by assistance funds that compensate landlords rather than just proceeding with evictions that endanger the health of vulnerable tenants and threaten the fabric of entire communities.

I commend Illinois, Cook County and Chicago leaders for providing rental and mortgage assistance funds. Chicago will provide \$33 million to an estimated 10,000 households. Cook County is providing \$20 million to over 4,400 suburban households and the state has allocated \$150 million in CARES Act funds for rental assistance. Applications for these programs close this week.

Obviously, it would be incredibly harmful to proceed with evictions when these funds are on their way to rescue so many tenants and landlords.

While tremendously helpful, these assistance programs will also only scratch the surface of ultimate need. I am certain that you share my ongoing call for the federal government to provide additional economic support to help renters and property owners through this extraordinary time.

A continued evictions moratorium coupled with aggressive pursuit of every possible avenue for financial relief for both property owners and renters provides the best opportunity for helping Cook County residents weather this unprecedented financial calamity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas J. Dart', written in a cursive style.

Thomas J. Dart  
Cook County Sheriff