



Housing Justice League Newsletter

April 2019

Tenants' Rights Bill HB 346 Passes Georgia House & Senate

by Richard Hunsinger

In a substantial move for the progress of tenants' rights in the State of Georgia, HB 346 has been passed by both the House and Senate of the State Legislature. Now, the bill goes to the Governor, who may either sign the bill into law or veto it. If the Governor does not sign or veto the bill, then it will become law in two months. Let's look at how HB 346 provides more legal protections for tenants!

HB 346 prohibits your landlord from retaliating against you

if you attempt to take certain actions to address concerns relating to life, health, safety, or habitability of your housing, such as:

- Attempt to remedy the issue by talking to your landlord
- Give your landlord notice to make necessary repairs or remedies
- Report the issues to Code Enforcement or any governmental entity that enforces housing and building codes
- Participate in or organize a Tenant Association

This last point is of particular importance, because it officially **makes organizing a tenant association where you live a protected legal activity**. And furthermore, if your landlord attempts to take any actions against you for these activities, such as an eviction/warrant for dispossessory or a rent increase that does not accord with the stipulations for doing so in your lease, then they take a hit in court for that too. You can even use an eviction they may file against you as retaliation as a legal defense in dispossessory court, and you may be able to recover from the landlord compensation for the court costs, one month's rent, \$500.00, and attorney's fees that you incur.

This law represents a significant change in the struggle for safe, decent, affordable housing in Georgia. For too long, this state's medieval tenant-landlord law has served as a tool that gives landlords far too much power over tenants' lives and freedom. This law is one step in the right direction to addressing that, but it's not enough on its own. It's up to us now to take advantage of it. When HB 346 becomes law in Georgia, we must persevere and continue to organize ourselves and our communities and be ready to use this new tool when needed. Legal protections help a lot, but the only thing that's really going to set back the tide of slumlording and exploitation in housing in Atlanta will be an organized people that won't take it anymore.



New Eviction Defense Tools for Fulton County

The County's Eviction Crisis is Ground Zero in Struggles Against Racism, Exploitation, and Dispossession

May 7th, 5:30-8:30 p.m., 2019
The Phillip Rush Center Annex

5:45 pm - Reading of RAHC Collective Statement

6:15 Presentation: What is the geography of eviction in Atlanta?

6:30 - Panel Discussion

- Nasheedah Muhammad - Director of Operations, Lost-n-Found Youth
- Elora Raymond - Assistant Professor, School of City and Regional Planning in the College of Design at Georgia Tech
- Andrew Thompson - head of the Fulton County Housing Court Assistance Center
- Latresa Chaney - Tenant Organizer with Housing Justice League (still need to confirm with Latresa)

7:30 What is HJL's Eviction Defense Campaign and Manual?

Fulton County is currently in an eviction crisis. Close to 800 new evictions are filed every week in Fulton County, and approximately 80% of people facing eviction in the county lose the chance to challenge their eviction in court, often because they do not understand the legal process (2016 Caseload Report, Judicial Council of Georgia Administrative Office of the Courts, 2016).

This crisis is a symptom of an oppressive system of laws and power that overwhelmingly favor landlords over tenants. This system, like the eviction crisis itself, is rooted in histories of economic exploitation, anti-Blackness, and dispossession of land and property from people of color and indigenous communities.

There are ways to resist evictions. However, tenants are often not made aware of their full legal rights, resources, and strategies that are available to them.

Hearing from different speakers and panelists we will collectively:

- Develop an analysis of the eviction crisis in Fulton County that situates it in history and within other housing, homelessness, and affordability crises in the Atlanta metro area
- Provide an overview of a new eviction defense campaign in Fulton County launching in 2019; the campaign will include workshops and concrete strategies and tools for intervening in eviction processes, and the distribution of a new *Eviction Defense Manual* written specifically for Fulton County residents by the Housing Justice League
- Connect the eviction crisis in Fulton County to the HIV/AIDS crisis in Fulton County, including cuts to the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program, conversations about stigma, and understandings of housing as the basis for health
- Offer space to build community connections and knowledge among stakeholders

The event will be useful to any individual, organization, group, or institution that deals with the uprooting effects of eviction. Whether you are a social service organization, church, tenants' association, housing provider, or an individual community member, this event will provide knowledge and tools that you can take into your life and work. Presented by the Housing Justice League in collaboration with the Redefining Affordable Housing Collective.



Housing Justice League
housingjusticeleague.org

April 2019

Spring Petition Drive Success!

by Livvy Feeney

April has been a big month for #BeltLine4All petition drives! As flowers are blooming across the City and folks are retiring their winter jackets for the season, the BeltLine for All campaign has gained new energy in collecting petition signatures. We're seeking out Spring festivals to collect lots of signatures in a short period of time. We had three petition drives in a row on April 5th, 6th, and 7th, and collected more than 400 signatures! Shoutout to our superstar volunteers Katie, Emma, Sanae, Ebony, John, and Gabe for making these petition drives happen. Check out some pictures from our table at Streets Alive on April 7th; bikers and walkers enjoyed Peachtree St. free of cars.

If you would like to sign the petition and hold the BeltLine accountable to their promise of 5600 affordable housing units, go to housingjusticeleague.org > BeltLine For All > Sign the petition. Share the link in your personal and professional networks to build support for this campaign. Find lots of ways to get involved in this campaign on our website.



SEEKING VENUE LOCATIONS!

We are seeking new spaces throughout Atlanta to hold mass meetings, tenant trainings, and other events. Spaces would preferably be wheelchair accessible, fit 30 people, have wall space to project, have free parking, be owned/managed by groups who support HJL's mission, and be free for our organization to use. Have any leads?

Email us at housingjusticeleague@gmail.com

Contribute to HJL's newsletter!

We are looking for volunteer editors/writers to work with impacted individuals to tell their stories, individuals who are directly impacted by housing injustice to write their story or work with a volunteer to do so, and photos/drawings/comics/etc.

Go to housingjusticeleague.com >> "News" >> "Contribute to the Newsletter" and fill out the short form.



Housing Justice League
housingjusticeleague.org

April 2019



Housing Justice League
presents the

Housing Justice Film Series

Join us to learn how gentrification has transformed cities and hear stories of communities fighting for housing as a human right!

March 13 at 7pm



City Rising

City Rising illuminates the journey of California's neighborhoods advocating for responsible development. The documentary examines gentrification in the state — its historical roots, economic role and social consequences.

April 17 at 7pm



Priced Out

Priced Out is an investigative and personal look at housing discrimination and the pain of losing a community to gentrification in Portland, Oregon. The film explores the complexities and contradictions of gentrification and life after the era of "the ghetto."

May 15 at 7pm



The Home Team

The construction of the Mercedes-Benz Stadium has brought a lot of hype and money to the Atlanta, but what about the neighbors next door? The new documentary, **The Home Team**, explores how Atlanta's Westside communities have been overshadowed due to the stadium development.

MOTHER Bar + Kitchen
447 Edgewood Ave SE,
Atlanta

Donations accepted and no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Yummy drinks and food available for order at MOTHER. Stick around after each film for a discussion!



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housingjusticeleague.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Check www.housingjusticeleague.org/events to confirm time, location, and event details!

Wednesday April 17 7:00pm – 9:00pm - *Priced Out*

Film Screening - **MOTHER Bar + Restaurant**

447 Edgewood Avenue Southeast Atlanta, GA, 30312 -

Join us for our second film in our Housing Justice Film Screening! *Priced Out* is an investigative and personal look at housing discrimination and the pain of losing a community to gentrification in Portland, Oregon. The film explores the complexities and contradictions of gentrification and life after the era of "the ghetto."

Saturday April 27 12:00 - 2:00 pm - *BeltLine4All*

Canvassing in South Atlanta - **Community Grounds**

1297 Jonesboro Rd SE - Come knock on doors with us

in South Atlanta neighborhoods and have conversations about the BeltLine for All campaign! We will be collecting signatures for our BeltLine for All petition and offering folks "House NOT For Sale" signs to let developers know that they will not be moved out of their community.

Wednesday April 24 6:00-7:30 pm - *HJL Membership*

Phone Bank and Pizza Party - **1136 Hawthorne St. NE** -

Help us make calls to solidify our membership base, over pizza! This is SUPER important - the future of the organization truly depends on it! If you can't make it there, send us an email and we can give you instructions and a list of numbers to call.

Tuesday April 30, 6:30 pm - *HJL Tenant Organizing*

Training - **700 Cooper St SW** - How to start a tenant association, protect tenant rights to quality, affordable housing, and build power to stop displacement!

Please email housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com to RSVP

Tuesday May 7, 5:30 pm - *Political Education Event,*

New Eviction Defense Tools for Fulton County: The

County's Eviction Crisis is Ground Zero in Struggles

Against Racism, Exploitation, and Dispossession - **The**

Phillip Rush Center Annex 1530 DeKalb Ave NE,

Atlanta, GA 30307 - See Page 2.

Tuesday, May 21, 6:30pm - *Mass Meeting* - **1040 Crew**

St SW 30315 - We will discuss the current status of all campaigns, the organization, and have breakouts for tenant associations, BeltLine for All, and more! It will be a potluck, so please bring a dish if you are able.

* For all events, please email us at

housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com if you need childcare.

Housing Justice League (HJL) is a community-led organization in Atlanta, GA.
Our mission is:

"To empower renters and homeowners to self-organize and defend their right to remain. We fight to preserve affordable housing, prevent gentrification, and build neighborhood power for an Atlanta-wide housing justice movement."

We are always looking for ways to work with and support community members dealing with housing issues. We are excited to hear your ideas and for new leadership. Come to our monthly meetings to join or start your own tenant association, volunteer for a campaign, or help with community outreach.

Go to **www.housingjusticeleague.org** to sign up to volunteer, make a donation, learn about membership, or check out our upcoming events!

Stay in the loop here:



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