[Name/Title of Your MPP]

cc. The Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

July 10, 2020

Dear [Mr./Ms./Minister….]

I am writing to you to urge you to vote against Bill 184, the “Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act, 2020,” which has been ordered for Third Reading in the provincial Legislature.

Contrary to its title, this Bill does little to protect Ontario tenants, but rather takes away tenant’s rights and makes it easier for landlords to evict them. More shamefully, it is being pushed through during a pandemic which has meant the loss of over a million Ontario jobs and put many low-income Ontarians, who are overwhelmingly renters, in a precarious financial position. This Bill threatens to make them homeless as well.

Bill 184 changes the Residential Tenancies Act to make it more difficult for tenants at an eviction hearing to bring up mitigating factors, such as harassment or state of disrepair, requiring them to give advance written notice of such issues. As well, the Bill promotes resolution of rental arrears and other issues through private dispute resolution processes rather than through mediation or adjudication by the Landlord and Tenant Board. This makes it easier for landlords to pressure vulnerable tenants, especially those who are not fluent in English, those who may have disabilities, and/or those who do not understand their rights, into signing repayment agreements they are unable to honour. If a tenant then misses even one repayment under such an agreement, the Bill now allows the landlord to apply to evict that tenant without notice.

Despite the representations of tenants’ advocates to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, these provisions were not only allowed to stand, but were made even more punitive. The requirement for both parties to consent to an alternative dispute resolution process has been removed. Moreover, the Bill has been changed to favour landlords who pursue private repayment agreements for rental arrears incurred on or after March 17, 2020 – the very date the COVID-19 state of emergency was first declared in Ontario. ***This Bill now specifically targets tenants who have fallen behind on rent due to lost income from the current pandemic.***

If this Bill passes, it will mean the evictions of many low-income and vulnerable Ontarian renters – people who will not be able to find suitable, affordable housing in the current market. It will create more homelessness, more hardship, and greater health risk for low-income Ontarians, and delay this province’s recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As your constituent, I urge you to vote against Bill 184 and stop it from becoming law in Ontario.

Yours truly,

[Your name]

[Your address including postal code]