

# President Biden's extension of the eviction moratorium would provide much needed relief to Massachusetts residents

With the COVID pandemic causing a drop or loss of household income and creating a crisis for property owners and tenants alike many are struggling to pay their mortgages and rent, some facing eviction.

In response, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a 60-day moratorium on evictions in all counties where COVID cases are considered at elevated levels. All of Massachusetts except two counties, Franklin and Hampshire, fall under the purview.

By June 30, Massachusetts had doled out \$191 million in assistance to more than 32,000 households and their landlords and state lawmakers passed measures to prevent the eviction of anyone whose application for relief is pending.

With the original moratorium put in place last September expiring on Sunday, this is much-needed good news, however, there are some speedbumps as states struggle to spread the \$47 billion in rental assistance. Essentially, this is like Hans Brinker sticking his finger "in the dike." Many Americans are disillusioned with the slow speed that politicians can notoriously move at and often bi-partisanship hoey can stall the process even further.

President Biden stated that reinstating the ban with areas with "substantial" or "high" rates of infection would be justified based on the fact that the Delta Variant of the

virus has begun to surge because of overcrowded housing as people who are evicted move into the homes of family and friends.

Biden's administration is faced with some hurdles: pushback from Senate Republicans and some landlord groups, both who oppose the moratorium, most notably the National Apartment Association, who is currently suing the federal government over the \$25 billion they are owed. The association feels an extension of the moratorium creates a situation where struggling landlords will be facing another two months without an income pushing them even deeper into debt.

Without support from Senate Republicans the moratorium may not survive in court but going through the litigation process will buy them time to get relief funds to tenants. "At a minimum, by the time it gets litigated, it will probably give some additional time while we're getting that \$45 billion out to people who are, in fact, behind in the rent and don't have the money," the president said.