

**LOCAL LAW 1 OF 2022 OF THE CITY OF KINGSTON, NEW YORK,
AUTHORIZING THE AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 332 OF THE CODE OF
THE CITY OF KINGSTON ENTITLED “RENTAL PROPERTIES” TO
PROHIBIT EVICTIONS WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE**

Sponsored By: Laws & Rules Committee: Alderman:
Ventura Morell, Worthington, Scott-
Childress, Hirsch, Tallerman

WHEREAS, renters in the City of Kingston, especially low and moderate income renters are increasingly faced with the refusal of landlords to continue to rent to otherwise credit-worthy tenants and tenants who are otherwise following all applicable laws. Tenants throughout the City have experienced steeply increased rents that threaten the general welfare of our City. We have seen large numbers of our neighbors displaced because they cannot afford increasing rents. The purpose of this law is to protect tenants from exorbitant rent increases that could result in increased homelessness and further displacement within the City.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. That the Common Council authorizes the amendment of Chapter 332 entitled Rental Properties of the Code of the City of Kingston as annexed hereto.

SECTION 2. If any provisions of this local law are held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of the local law shall remain in effect.

SECTION 3. This local law shall take effect upon filing with the Secretary of State.

Submitted to the Mayor this ____ day of _____, 2022

Approved by the Mayor this ____ day of _____, 2022

Elisa Tinti, City Clerk

Steven T. Noble, Mayor

Adopted by Council on _____, 2022

ARTICLE 2.

332-13. Definitions

As used in this Article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

DISABLED PERSON applies the definition set forth in the New York State Human Rights Law and ADA.

HOUSING ACCOMMODATION means residential premises, including a dwelling, dwelling unit, or rooming unit as defined in this Chapter, located in the City of Kingston.

LANDLORD means any owner, lessor, sub-lessor, assignor, or other person receiving or entitled to receive rent for the occupancy of any housing accommodation or the agent of any of the foregoing.

RENT means any consideration, including any bonus, benefit, or gratuity, demanded or received for or in consideration with the possession, use, or occupancy of housing accommodations or the execution or transfer of a lease for such housing accommodations.

TENANT means a tenant, sub-tenant, lessee, sub-lessee, assignee, manufactured home tenant as defined in paragraph one of subsection (A) of section two hundred thirty-three of the New York State Real Property Law, an occupant of a rooming house or hotel as defined in section seven hundred eleven of the New York State Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law, or any other person entitled to the possession, use or occupancy of any housing accommodation.

Section 332-14. Applicability.

This article shall apply to all housing accommodations except:

A. Owner-occupied premises with fewer than four total units including that of the owner—that is, a property comprised of one owner-occupied unit and either one or two rentals units.

B. Premises where the possession, use or occupancy of which is solely incident to employment and such employment is being lawfully terminated.

Section 332-15 Grounds

A. Grounds for removal of tenants. No landlord shall remove a tenant from any housing accommodation, or attempt such removal or exclusion from possession, notwithstanding that the tenant has no written lease, or that the lease or other rental agreement has expired or otherwise terminated, except upon order of a court of competent jurisdiction entered in an appropriate judicial action or proceeding in which the petitioner or plaintiff has established one of the following grounds as good cause for removal or eviction:

(1) The tenant has failed to pay rent due and owing, provided, however, that the rent due and owing, or any part thereof, did not result from a rent increase or pattern of rent increases which, regardless of the tenant's prior consent, if any, is imposed through fraud, duress or conditions of direct control for the purpose of circumventing the intent of this article. In determining whether all or part of the rent due and owing is the result of a rent increase that is imposed through fraud, duress or conditions of direct control for the purpose of circumventing this article, the Court may consider, among other factors: i) the rate of the increase relative to the tenant's income; ii) improvements made to the subject unit or common areas serving said unit; iii) whether the increase was precipitated by the tenant engaging in the activity described at section 223-b (1)(a) (c) of the Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law; iv) significant market

changes relevant to the subject unit; and v) the condition of the unit or common areas serving the unit, and it shall be a rebuttable presumption that the rent for a dwelling not protected by rent regulation is unconscionable or imposed for the purpose of circumventing the intent of this article if said rent has been increased in any calendar year by a percentage exceeding five (5%) percent;

(2) The tenant is violating a reasonable obligation of their tenancy, other than the obligation to surrender possession, and has failed to cure such violation after written notice that the violation cease within ten days of receipt of such written notice, provided however, that the obligation of tenancy for which violation is claimed was not imposed for the purpose of circumventing the intent of this article;

(3) The tenant is committing or permitting a nuisance in such housing accommodation, common areas, or other areas of the property, or is maliciously or by reason of negligence, beyond ordinary wear and tear, damaging the housing accommodation, common areas, or other areas of the property; or the tenant's conduct is such as to interfere with the comfort of the landlord or other tenants or occupants of the same building or structure, including but not limited to, smoking inside the residential unit where smoking inside the residential unit has been prohibited by the landlord and such prohibition has been communicated to the tenant, failing to dispose of waste created by the tenant's pet(s) from the property on which the residential unit is located in accordance with relevant laws, repeatedly engaging in activities that cause an unreasonable amount of noise or allowing others to do so without taking appropriate steps to mitigate such noise, and causing the accumulation of excessive rubbish and/or garbage in the residential unit and common areas;

(4) Occupancy of the housing accommodation by the tenant is in violation of law or makes the accommodation inhabitable and the landlord is subject to civil or criminal penalties therefor; provided

however that the City of Kingston or other qualified governmental entity has issued an order requiring the tenant to vacate the housing accommodation. No tenant shall be removed from possession of a housing accommodation on such ground unless the court finds that the cure of the violation of law requires the removal of the tenant and that the landlord did not, through neglect or deliberate action or failure to act, create the condition necessitating the order to vacate. In instances where the landlord does not undertake to cure conditions of the housing accommodation causing such violation of the law, the tenant shall have the right to pay or secure payment in a manner satisfactory to the court, to cure such violation provided that any tenant expenditures shall be applied against rent to which the landlord is entitled. In instances where removal of a tenant is absolutely essential to their health and safety, the removal of the tenant shall be without prejudice to any leasehold interest or other right of occupancy the tenant may have and the tenant shall be entitled to resume possession at such time as the dangerous conditions have been removed. Nothing herein shall abrogate or otherwise limit the right of a tenant to bring an action for monetary damages against the landlord to compel compliance by the landlord with all applicable laws;

(5) The tenant is using or permitting the housing accommodation to be used for an illegal purpose;

(6) The tenant has unreasonably refused the landlord access to the housing accommodation for the purpose of making necessary repairs or improvements required by law or for the purpose of showing the housing accommodation to a prospective purchaser, mortgagee, or other person having a legitimate interest therein;

(7) The landlord seeks in good faith to recover possession of a housing accommodation located in a building containing fewer than twelve units because of immediate and compelling necessity for the landlord's own personal use and occupancy as their principal residence, or the personal use

and occupancy as principal residence of the landlord's partner, spouse, parent, child, stepchild, father-in-law or mother-in-law, when no other suitable housing accommodation in such building is available. This paragraph shall permit recovery of only one housing accommodation and shall not apply to a housing accommodation occupied by a tenant who is sixty-two years of age or older or who is a disabled person with one or more disabilities;

(8) The landlord seeks in good faith to recover possession of any or all housing accommodations located in a building with less than five units to personally occupy such housing accommodations as their principal residence;

(9) Where the tenant has refused in bad faith to enter into a written lease which has been offered in good faith to the tenant by the landlord, subject to the following:

(a) The proposed written lease must have been offered to the tenant in writing on at least two occasions at least two weeks apart; and such written offer shall include:

(i) an original and one copy of the proposed written lease, executed by the landlord or the landlord's designee;

(ii) notice of the landlord's intention to pursue eviction if the tenant rejects the proposed written lease and/or does not enter into said lease within forty-five days of the initial offer and specifying that the landlord may pursue eviction at any time between the expiration of the 45 days and 120 days of the date of such offer;

(iii) clearly written instructions (including contact information, best times for contact, any any deadlines) to the tenant concerning the manner in which the tenant is to communicate to the landlord acceptance or rejection of the written lease: and

(iv) Notice of any proposed increase in rent equal to or greater than five (5%) percent shall be provided in compliance with Real Property Law section 226-C; (b) the proposed written lease shall not supersede the terms of an existing lease to which the landlord and the tenant are parties;

(b) The terms of the proposed written lease may not:

(i) be unconscionable and/or mandate or proscribe activities not rationally related to the regulation of activities that would create a nuisance at the property or cause discomfort to the tenants or occupants of the same or adjacent buildings or structures, including, but not limited to activities described in paragraph 3 of subdivision A above;

(ii) substantially alter the terms of an existing lease other than to provide, as a result of a written request by either party delivered in a timely fashion to the other, clarification of the terms and conditions of the tenancy;

(c) the proposed written lease shall not be offered for the purposes of circumventing this article;

(d) the tenant shall be entitled to dismissal of any eviction petition brought for the tenant's refusal to enter into a lease if:

(i) the tenant consents to enter into the proposed written lease presented in the first offer pursuant to subparagraph 9 (a) at any time prior to the earlier of the execution of the warrant of eviction or the good faith execution of an enforceable lease agreement between the landlord and a third party in an arms-length transaction for the premises occupied by the tenant; and/or

(ii) prior to the commencement of the eviction proceeding the tenant attempted in good faith to negotiate the terms of the proposed written lease without substantially altering the terms of the prior lease agreement and that the landlord refused in bad faith to engage in such negotiation; and/or

(iii) the tenant's failure to enter into the proposed written lease was due to the tenant's legitimate failure to comprehend the terms of the proposed written lease;

(iv) the tenant is a victim of domestic violence as defined by NY Social Service Law §459-A and is unable to safely enter into the proposed written lease due to good faith concerns for the tenant's personal safety; and/or

(v) the proposed written lease includes an increase in rent or increase in the tenant's responsibility for recurring payments associated with the tenancy that would violate the terms or intent of Section A (1) above;

(e) that any proceeding for eviction pursuant to this subsection shall have been commenced within 120 days of the proposed written lease as stipulated in Section A (9)(a) first having been offered to the tenant, provided, however, the landlord may commence the process for execution of a lease pursuant to this subdivision by submitting a new or revised lease to the tenant that would recommence the 120-day time period for a potential eviction action pursuant to this subdivision.

B. Nothing in this section shall abrogate or limit the tenant's right, pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-one of the New York State Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law, to stay the issuance or execution of a warrant or eviction in a summary proceeding, whether characterized as a nonpayment, objectionable tenancy, or holdover proceeding, the underlying

basis of which is the nonpayment of rent, so long as the tenant complies with the procedural requirements of section seven hundred fifty-one of the New York State Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law.