

# Sen. Gonzalez unveils COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program

May 1, 2020 <https://www.sacramento.com/news/2020-05-01-sen-gonzalez-unveils-covid-19-emergency-rental-assistance-program>  
Sacramento, Calif.- Today, California State Senator Lena A. Gonzalez (D- Long Beach) introduced Senate Bill (SB) 1410 to help both renters and rental property owners endure the financial hardships brought on by COVID-19. SB 1410, The COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program, would provide direct rental payment relief to renters who demonstrate an inability to pay rent due to the pandemic, as well as landlords who agree to specified terms, such as forgoing rent increases and late charges.

“COVID-19 has immensely affected our economy, put pressure on both tenants and property owners to fulfill their payment obligations, and has exacerbated the need to keep people housed during an existing housing crisis,” said Senator Gonzalez. “In order to protect our broader housing economy, SB 1410, an urgency measure, will not only provide much-needed immediate assistance to both tenants and property owners but also protect our most vulnerable communities.”

The Department of Housing and Community Development would administer this temporary rental assistance program. Eligible renters for the program would include those who can demonstrate, as determined by the department, inability to pay rent due to COVID-19 or a government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rental housing providers who agree to participate in the program would receive at least 80 percent of the monthly rent the tenant owes for up to seven months, if they agree to:

- Not increase rent for the unit for a specified period;
- Not collect late fees for the past due rent paid by the program;
- Not pursue any remaining rent owed for the months paid by the program.

The California Apartment Association, the nation’s largest statewide association representing rental housing providers, applauded Gonzalez for introducing a bill that helps both housing providers and their customers.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has brought frightening and uncertain times, leaving many Californians with health challenges and economic difficulties,” said Debra Carlton, CAA’s executive vice president for state public affairs. “Sen. Gonzalez has offered a solution that will help housing providers continue to pay their bills, and their employees, while also making it a little easier for struggling renters to get back on their feet financially when the pandemic ends.”

Senator Anna Caballero and Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris are both principle co-authors of SB 1410.

“Both tenants and property owners are facing unprecedented financial challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” stated Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine). “With millions of Californians filing for unemployment, it is only right for the Legislature to intervene and establish an emergency rental assistance program to ensure that people are able to stay home and stay healthy so we’re ready to come back and beat this recession.”

“This is a crisis. We cannot afford for more people to become homeless because they cannot afford to pay the rent. We must take bold action to prevent the tsunami of evictions headed our way. We must provide financial relief to California renters and their families impacted by COVID-19. We have a responsibility

during these difficult times to ensure all Californians have the resources to maintain their housing and help property owners recoup the rent," stated Senator Caballero.

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