

Sponsored by Councilor Lydia Edwards



**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**

**A RESOLUTION RELATIVE
TO EVICTION SEALING**

WHEREAS: Since 1988, over 1 million eviction cases have been filed in Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS: Once a case is filed, it becomes part of that tenant's eviction record, which documents the tenant's history of ever having sued or been sued by a landlord; and

WHEREAS: Regardless of fault, outcome, or underlying basis for a court filing, possessing any record Of an eviction filing can present a serious barrier to a tenant's ability to secure housing, as the mere fact that they were party to an eviction or housing case may give a landlord reason to reject their application; and

WHEREAS: In 2013, the Massachusetts Trial Court began placing eviction record information online, making a tenant's court record history easily accessible to the public as well as tenant screening companies; and

WHEREAS: Tenant screening services routinely recommend rejections of tenants for having been in court, *regardless of the outcome of the case*, and erroneously mix records of persons with similar names; and

WHEREAS: Children and minors named in eviction proceedings bear permanent records that impact their search for housing when they become adults; and

WHEREAS: In June 2019, the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute released "Evicted for Life," a report chronicling the impact and stigma of evictions records on Massachusetts residents; and

WHEREAS: Today, tenants who come to agreement and settle with their landlord, correct errors in their record, or otherwise need support to alter the publicly available and permanently available record, lack the means to do so; and

WHEREAS: Many landlords who routinely file a notice to quit simply as a matter of course at the conclusion of a tenancy are unaware of the collateral consequences of eviction records or of the growing record of evictions they themselves are accumulating; and

WHEREAS: Legislation introduced in the Massachusetts legislature by Rep. Michael Moran and Sen.

Joseph Boncore would protect tenants from being unfairly branded with an eviction record by sealing records until a judgment is rendered and ensuring the accuracy of records; and

WHEREAS: Said legislation does not in any way alter the rights of landlords or property owners and allows all parties to exercise legal rights while moving on with their lives; **NOW THEREFORE**

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Boston City Council go on record in support of *S.824 and H.3566, An Act promoting housing opportunity and mobility through eviction sealing.*

Filed in City Council: June 19, 2019