

Housing Legislative Report

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What is our Message in Advocating for Housing?



All Georgians thrive when everyone has a safe, decent, affordable, and stable place to call home.

It's the Law!


- **“Housing is an issue of paramount importance to this state which affects the health, welfare, and safety of the citizens of this state and the economic viability and planned growth of its communities.”** OCGA §8-3-170 (1991).
- **It is “the state’s policy to provide decent, safe, and affordable housing to all segments of the population of this state.”** OCGA §8-3-171 (1991).



Looking Back and Looking Ahead

- **Halftime in 2023-2024 Legislative Session**
 - **Some wins – More to do!**
- **2024 Is a Key Election Year**
 - **Presidential Election**
 - **All Members of U.S. House of Representatives**
 - **All Members of Georgia House and Senate**
- **2024 Housing Policy Priorities**
- **Housing Day at the Capitol 2024**
- **What Can I Do?**





What Happened in 2023?

House Bill 404 – Safe at Home Act

Tenant Protections



HB 404 requires that all rental housing be “fit for human habitation,” caps security deposits at two months’ rent, and provides a 3-business day right to cure the nonpayment of rent or vacate the premises after receiving written notice before the landlord can file for an eviction. These protections would be an important step forward and bring Georgia tenant protection laws more in line with long standing norms in almost all other states.



Status of legislation following 2023 Legislative Session: HB 404 passed the House unanimously but failed to receive a Senate floor vote in the final minutes of the session. It remains alive for enactment in 2024.



We will work to strengthen and pass HB 404 in 2024. We are currently monitoring activities of the Georgia and Atlanta Apartment Association on HB 404 and their efforts to speed evictions in response to covid backlogs and will be prepared to respond.

The New York Times

Oct. 2, 2023

The Americans Most Threatened by Eviction: Young Children

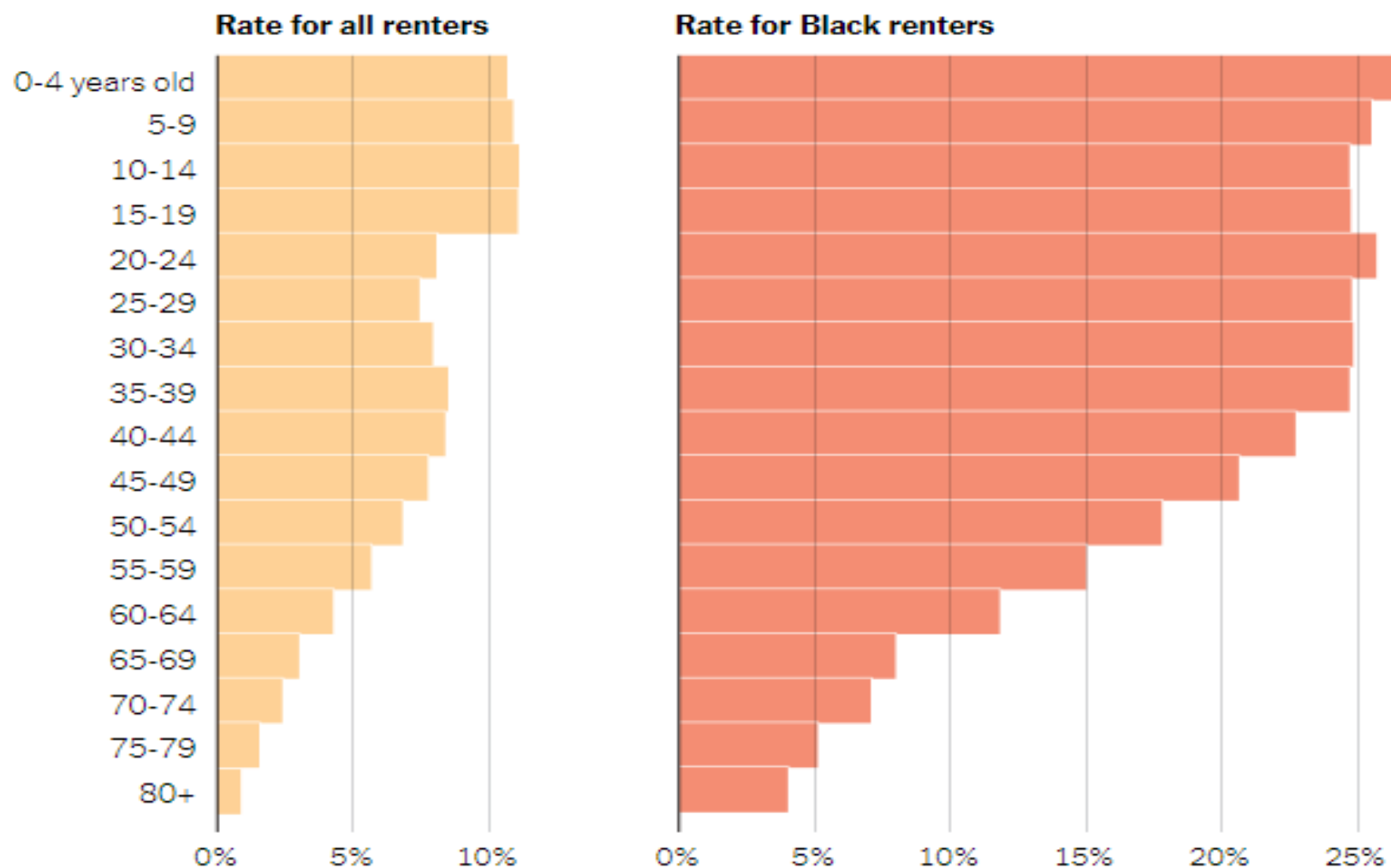
About a quarter of Black babies and toddlers in rental households face the threat of eviction in a typical year, a new study says, and all children are disproportionately at risk.

All children, and especially the youngest, account for a disproportionate share of those threatened with eviction, [the study found](#). And the risk is acute for Black children and their mothers, ages 20 to 35. In a given year, about a quarter of Black children under 5 in rental homes live in a household facing an eviction filing.

Those patterns reflect in part how poorly the American housing market serves low-income families. And it suggests that housing instability falls heaviest on a young population least equipped to handle it.

Black Renters Face Eviction at Significantly Higher Rates

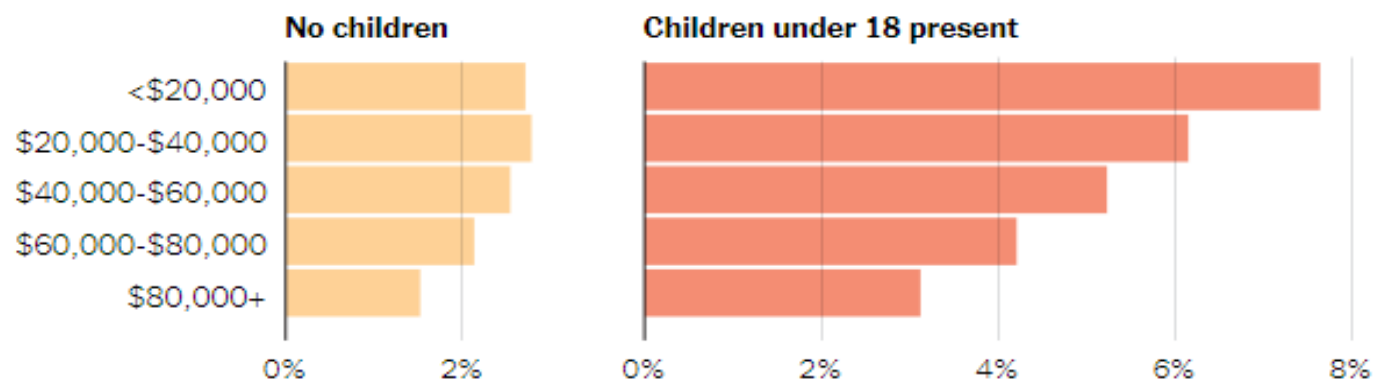
Eleven percent of all children under 5 in rental households face eviction each year. But that rate is 27 percent for Black children under 5 in rentals.



Source: "A Comprehensive Demographic Profile of the United States Evicted Population," by researchers at Princeton, Rutgers and the U.S. Census Bureau - Note: Data covers 2007-2016.

Children Increase Eviction Risk at Every Income Level

Share of renters who are evicted each year, by household income.



Source: "A Comprehensive Demographic Profile of the United States Evicted Population," by researchers at Princeton, Rutgers and the U.S. Census Bureau - Note: Data covers 2007-2016.

In recent years, [researchers have demonstrated](#) that adverse childhood experiences can have lifelong consequences for health, education and employment. [Housing instability](#) before age 5 can lead to [delays in kindergarten readiness](#), and is [associated](#) with [attention](#) and [behavior](#) challenges and delayed [cognitive skills](#) throughout school. In adolescence, these children are more likely to have [depression and anxiety](#) and challenges with [information processing](#).



Evictions Endanger Life and Health

- Georgia has had some of the highest eviction rates and eviction filing rates of any state in the country for decades.
- Evictions have returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Georgia has few tenant protections making it easy to evict people.
- Rents are skyrocketing because of a massive shortfall of affordable and available homes for low income and extremely low-income families.
- Evictions damage the physical and mental health of children and adults, permanently harm pregnancy outcomes, undermine children's ability to succeed in school, parent's ability to hold a job, and for families to flourish.

Homelessness

Senate Bill 62 – Unsheltered Homelessness

- SB 62 amended to remove harmful provisions that criminalized homelessness and diverted funds away from housing and into encampments. This legislation passed after significant defensive strategy and harm mitigation.
- The Cicero folks may be back in 2024 with their encampment proposals and maybe a new threat of anti-panhandling legislation.
- State Auditor's report required under SB 62 about where homeless funding is going, what resources local law enforcement is spending on homelessness, and the efficacy of the homeless management information system (HMIS).

Housing

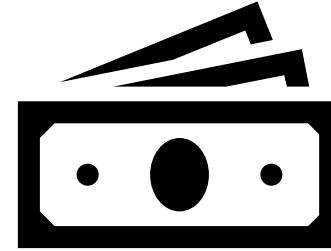
Senate Bill 125 – Rent Control Ban Repeal

- This bill would repeal Georgia's current ban on rent control laws.
- Georgia is one of 32 states that have enacted rent control pre-emption/ban laws.
- Testimony to Senate Urban Affairs Committee, highlighting the need for increased tenant protections eviction diversion, and affordable housing investment.

Governor's Rural Workforce Housing Fund

- Reallocated \$35.7 Million for development of land in connection with large economic development projects for workforce housing. \$8.7 M allocated.

FY23 A and FY 24 Budgets



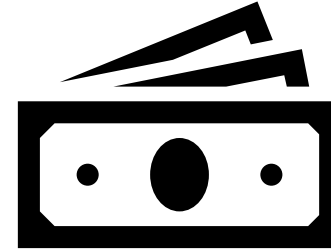
- FY 23 Amended and 24 Budgets each allocated **\$825,000 for outreach to Atlanta homeless.**
- FY 2024 Budget increased funding to DBHDD for Georgia Housing Voucher Program by \$1.9M for supportive housing and services to homeless persons with severe mental illness who are cycling through the criminal justice system, state hospitals and emergency departments. ***These funds ordered to be “disregarded” by Governor Kemp lifted by Governor in Oct 2023. DBHDD Board voted to add \$1.9 M for FY 2025 Budget.***
- FY 2024 add to the Housing Trust Fund \$800,000 increase for Home Access Program to increase

grants for home accessibility modifications for people with disabilities. ***These funds were also ordered to be “disregarded” by Governor Kemp.***

How Were Surplus Dollars Spent in 2023?

- *\$1 B for Tax Rebates*
- *\$1B to restore funds withheld on gas taxes*
- *\$1B for Homeowner Tax Rebates*
 - *No assistance for renters, homeless, or persons priced out of the housing market.*

FT 24A and FY 25 Budgets



Increased Funding Invited

Gov. Kemp issued instructions allowing departments to seek a 3% increase in funding for the FY 24 Amended Budget, as well as one time funding. He also allowed them to request an increase of 3% for the FY 25 Budget combined with a 1% cut to department spending.

Historic Budget Surplus

At the close of the 2023 Fiscal year on June 30 the state enjoyed a third year with a historic budget surplus of over \$5 Billion. This leaves Georgia with a cumulative unobligated surplus of \$10.7 Billion after fully funding the rainy day reserve fund.

- Due to infusion of federal COVID and ARPA funds and Governor setting the revenue estimate low.

Budget Increases Identified

- The State Housing Trust Fund for Homeless will seek an increase of \$1.5 M for the next two years to fund the state match required for the \$11.5M Homeless Youth Demonstration Project for the Balance of State Continuum of Care.
- Advocates will seek additional increases to:
 - Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless that has remained stagnant at \$3.2 M (in addition to substantial one-time funding).
 - Homeless services and supportive housing.
 - DBHDD Georgia Housing Voucher Program.
 - Retain \$825K for Atl Homeless Outreach.
 - Other housing opportunities.

What's Ahead in 2024? Funding for Housing



Advocate for Increased Funding to the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless



Advocate for one-time funding from \$10.7 Billion unobligated budget surplus to the existing Georgia Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless for construction and preservation of affordable housing for low-income households.



Advocate for enabling legislation to allow cities and counties to raise taxes and fees to dedicate to a local housing trust fund, empowering local jurisdictions to raise and spend housing funds.

Protect State Low Income Housing Tax Credit (SLIHTC)

These are the **ONLY** state dollars going toward the development and preservation of affordable housing in Georgia.



Joint Senate and House Tax Credit Review Panel reviewing SLIHTC following the 2022 State Auditor's Report.



SLIHTC is one of 10 Georgia tax credits currently being reviewed.



The Joint Tax Credit Review Panel will discuss SLIHTC and issue a final report soon. Could result in legislation in 2024 affecting SLIHTC.



UGA Report found \$5.79 of economic activity for every \$1 invested in SLIHTC. Loss of SLIHTC funding for housing would reduce production of affordable units by 60%. Georgia program recognized as a national model.



SLIHTC supported by Georgia Dept of Community Affairs that administers it, for profit and non-profit developers, syndicators, housing advocates, etc. as the key tool to build more housing for low-income households.

You Can Make A Difference!

- **Prior to the legislative session which convenes on January 8, 2024, meet with your State Senator and State Representative and discuss your housing priorities with them.**
- **Watch for updates and alerts during the legislative session and throughout the year and take action when asked.**
- **Come to the Capitol for Housing Day on February 28, 2023!**
Details to be announced soon.
- **Be active in the election process and help others to join with you – register to vote, educate others on the issues and the candidates' positions, help get out the vote.**

Thank you!

Questions? Comments?

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