

At least 46,000 people just lost their jobs in Virginia. Now rent is due.

By **Ned Oliver** - March 30, 2020



The John Marshall Hotel building in Downtown Richmond now contains apartment housing. (Photo by Ned Oliver/Virginia Mercury)

More than **46,000** suddenly unemployed workers in Virginia will face a stressful battery of bills with the turn of the month on Wednesday. Chief among them: rent.

“The biggest issue is some renters don’t know what to expect,” Christie Marra, the Virginia Poverty Law Center’s director of housing advocacy, said. “There’s no consistent rule saying, ‘Hey, stop issuing eviction notices, stop calling the sheriff to throw people out.’”

Some landlords are reaching out to tenants with the promise of payment plans and other consideration – an approach pushed by industry groups that they say is good for business and renters. Other landlords are not, instead sending firm reminders that rent is still due on April 1.

Eviction moratorium extended, but rent is still due

The Supreme Court of Virginia **extended** an emergency judicial order Friday that has had the effect of freezing eviction cases around the state. Aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 in courthouses, it had been set to expire April 6 but is now continued through at least April 26.

But while no eviction cases will be heard during that time period, rent is still due and landlords can still file lawsuits to begin the process of evicting tenants who don't pay.

Once the judicial emergency ends, courts will begin hearing the cases, leaving some advocates concerned about a sudden surge in homelessness in the coming months.

"The problem is they're piling up," Marra says.

Some landlords offer payment plans, others don't

A coalition of large landlords in Virginia is encouraging its members to work out payment plans with their tenants who have been suddenly been left jobless.

"We have asked all of our members to consider making accommodations wherever possible," said Patrick McCloud, executive director of the Virginia Apartment Management Association.

He urged residents worried about how they will pay their bills to reach out to their landlords now to discuss their individual cases. "Without question, most of our members are on board, but again, I can not stress this enough, it really hinges on people being proactive. The further in advance we know, the more time we have to make those arrangements work."

Some property managers are also proactively approaching their tenants to offer payment plans to people who can provide documentation showing a loss of income, for instance, a pay stub from a closed business or an application for unemployment benefits.

Community Housing Partners, which manages 84 properties containing 4,381 units in Virginia, says it's suspended late fees and, instead of issuing late notices, will individually call tenants who don't pay this month "to see if we can work with them," said Micahel Sutphin, a spokesman for the Christiansburg-based nonprofit.

Next month, they're planning to offer all their tenants a \$25 rent reduction.

"So rent is still due, but we'll certainly work individually with residents who have any concerns," Sutphin said.

Other landlords have been less flexible. Several tenants who lost their jobs this month shared email correspondence from their landlords instructing them that rent was still due, regardless of their circumstances.

"She basically said we can certainly empathize, however you did sign a lease," said Jo Rozycki, a senior at William & Mary who relied on two on-campus jobs to



supplement her income.

Unemployment benefits begin to flow

So far, unemployment benefits have been the primary aid available to workers in Virginia. People who applied on March 16, when businesses began to close en masse, report that they received their first check Wednesday — about a week and a half later.

The benefits are small — a maximum of \$380 a week in Virginia — but are set to substantially increase in the coming weeks.

The \$2-trillion bailout passed by Congress and signed by President Donald Trump over the weekend offers [an additional \\$600 a week](#) for the next four months on top of the state benefits to which they were already entitled. That's on top of the \$1,200 check the government is cutting to most Americans.

The program has already been [expanded](#) to cover people who are unable to work because they're sick, caring for a sick family member or providing childcare because of school closures.

The legislation also expands the program to include self-employed and gig workers, such as Uber and Lyft drivers.

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Evictions ramp up in Virginia as local courts decline governor's request to continue moratorium

By **Ned Oliver** - July 7, 2020



Protesters at the John Marshall Courthouse in Richmond on Wednesday opposed the end of a statewide eviction moratorium. (Ned Oliver/Virginia Mercury)

Courts around Virginia began working their way through a backlog of more than 12,000 eviction cases last week as a statewide moratorium expired, with many judges apparently declining a last-minute request from Gov. Ralph Northam to continue the stay at the local level.

“It’s a total patchwork,” said Christie Marra, the director of housing advocacy at the Virginia Poverty Law Center, which has asked Northam to use his executive authority to intervene more decisively. She said the current approach of leaving the decision to local courts is “absolutely not working.”

Meanwhile landlord groups said they were pleased that judges had resumed hearing the cases. “I think the worry with any moratorium is you start to cross a point where a moratorium starts to become an unconstitutional taking,” said Patrick McCloud, executive director of the Virginia Apartment Management Association. He said most tenants are continuing to pay rent, which he credited to federal unemployment and stimulus programs. “Rent collections are not terribly far off from where they would be absent a pandemic.”

District courts docketed more than 1,600 eviction lawsuits last week, with judges awarding \$1.4 million in cash judgments to landlords, according to online docket

information compiled by open government group virginiacourtdata.org.

That's 600 more cases than courts heard the same week last year, according to the data. But the numbers also show a slight shift in the outcome of the cases in favor of tenants, with landlords winning judgments in 23 percent of cases, down from 41 percent at the same time last year.

It's unclear precisely how many of the 129 district courts in the state agreed to Northam's request that they continue to delay the cases, but the count appears to be low. The Supreme Court of Virginia's administrative office said it didn't track that information. Northam's spokeswoman, Alena Yarmosky, said the administration didn't have a full list but is aware of only two: Arlington General District Court and Fairfax General District Court.

"Gov. Northam is grateful that these courts have complied with his request, and he continues to strongly urge all General District Courts to follow suit," she said in an email, noting Northam is seeking millions in additional federal funding to shore up a rent and mortgage relief program launched by his administration.

Of the cases that were heard last week, the outcomes varied dramatically by jurisdiction. Virginia Beach, Hampton and Portsmouth recorded the largest share of judgments in favor of landlords, according to court records analyzed by virginiacourtdata.org. In other cities and counties, including Richmond, Albemarle and Henrico, the numbers favored tenants, with more cases continued or dismissed.

Protesters at the John Marshall Courthouse in Richmond on Wednesday opposed the end of a statewide eviction moratorium. (Ned Oliver/Virginia Mercury)

In Richmond, the decision to resume hearing cases prompted several hundred people to protest Wednesday outside the courthouse. The rally ended in a clash with sheriff's deputies that saw three people detained and a courthouse window smashed, according to the [Richmond Times-Dispatch](#).

During the afternoon eviction docket the next day, Judge Claire Cardwell granted continuances to all the tenants who appeared in court under a new state law that guarantees people facing financial hardship related to the pandemic at least two extra months to pay rent.

Among them was Barbara Zahniser, one of the 22 residents called to court that afternoon by St. John's Wood Apartments in South Richmond. She explained to the judge that she had lost her job after a car crash and her unemployment insurance had run out in March as the pandemic began. She is eligible for extended benefits because of the pandemic, she testified, but Virginia has been slow to set up the program. Meantime, she said she wasn't able to find work.

"I'm in home health care," she said. "The elderly, they're afraid to let people into their homes."

Many tenants who didn't appear in court benefited in absentia from eviction protections written into the federal CARES Act, which bars landlords with federally backed mortgages or who participate in certain government programs from initiating evictions until the end of July.

"There have been some default judgments when people did not show up and it was determined that their property didn't fall under the CARES Act," said Janae Craddock, a housing attorney with the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society who works out of an office in the courthouse and has been monitoring dockets to ensure property owners covered by the CARES Act didn't seek eviction judgments. "For the most part though, there have been a lot of continuances."

But advocates worried that CARES Act protections are set to expire soon and that not all courts are requiring landlords to proactively testify that they are not prohibited from pursuing evictions under the law, meaning tenants might only benefit from the protection if they both appear in court and know about the new law. And they argue tenants shouldn't have to come to court amid a pandemic to exercise their right to a two-month continuance under state code.

"It's encouraging that judges are granting continuances liberally in individual cases," said Marra at the Virginia Poverty Law Center. "But that doesn't help people who can't show up for whatever reason or were turned away at the courthouse because they had a fever."



But Richard Knapp, a longtime housing lawyer who was representing St. John's Wood in court that day, noted landlords have their own bills to pay. "My concern is some of the smaller landlords are going to have to go bankrupt because they're not getting rent," he said.

That's presumably where Northam's rent and mortgage relief program comes in. It launched last week and aims to address the financial needs of both tenants and landlords by covering unpaid back rent.

But it remains to be seen how many tenants will seek aid and how many landlords will agree to the attached terms, which require a commitment to either waive some unpaid rent or wait at least six months before pursuing an eviction again.

The state Department of Housing and Community Development says it's seen high interest, but won't have firm numbers until next week.

Ned Oliver

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Landlords ask Supreme Court of Virginia to make eviction proceedings easier

By **Ned Oliver** - October 12, 2020



Protesters at the John Marshall Courthouse in Richmond on Wednesday opposed the end of a statewide eviction moratorium. (Ned Oliver/Virginia Mercury)

A group that represents landlords around the state is asking the Supreme Court of Virginia to make it easier for them to move eviction lawsuits through the court system.

In a letter late last week to Chief Justice Don Lemons, the Virginia Apartment Management Association requested the court issue an order prohibiting local judges from requiring property owners to swear they're abiding by federal protections before signing off on evictions, arguing the practice unfairly biases the trial process against them.

"I understand it is difficult for judges to hear unlawful detainer cases during this pandemic, but it is not the place of our judiciary to become an advocate for one party over the other," said the association's chief executive, Patrick McCloud. "Both parties deserve equal access to our court system so that cases before the judiciary can be adjudicated free of predetermined bias."

Tenant advocates expressed disbelief upon learning of the letter. They warned that if the Supreme Court grants the request, it will lead to more evictions and erode existing protections, which they say are already limited, confusing and difficult for tenants to utilize.

“I’m very disappointed that during this pandemic, an association whose mission is to provide housing to people would go out of its way to ask the Supreme Court to make it easier for landlords to evict tenants,” said Christie Marra, the director of housing advocacy at the Virginia Poverty Law Center.

At issue is a practice in some courts in which judges ask landlords and the attorneys representing them to provide an affidavit stating that the property in question is not covered by protections under the CARES Act. Some courts have also begun asking landlords to swear that the tenant has not taken steps to exercise their rights under a limited federal moratorium put in place by the Centers for Disease Control.

The effect is to extend those federal protections to tenants even in cases where they don’t appear in court, an extremely common occurrence that typically leads to a default judgement in favor of the landlord. Advocates who support the affidavit requirement said it’s especially important given how poorly understood the CARES Act and CDC order are among tenants, who may not realize they have a defense in their case or don’t understand the intricacies of the federal laws and regulations in place.

It’s unclear how many courts are requiring property managers to sign affidavits before granting eviction judgements, but the practice is widespread enough that landlords argue it’s become an impediment to evictions and tenant advocates argue it’s indeed helping keep people in their homes. The apartment management association specifically cited courts in three jurisdictions they say are requiring the affidavits, Chesapeake, Waynesboro and Chesterfield. Legal aid groups say it’s also common in the Richmond area and Northern Virginia.

To take advantage of the CDC’s eviction moratorium, tenants must provide their landlord a signed [declaration](#) swearing under penalty of perjury that they would become homeless if evicted, have experienced a substantial loss of income as a result of the pandemic and have “used best efforts to obtain all available government assistance for rent or housing.”

Lawyers who represent housing providers said tenants who are asserting a defense based on the CDC’s moratorium should be required to appear in court to mount it themselves. They say putting the onus on the landlord to affirm that they have or have not received a declaration from a tenant deprives them of the opportunity to challenge the tenant’s assertions in the declaration. In particular, they question whether all tenants submitting a declaration have truly sought rental assistance through a state program established by Gov. Ralph Northam which now pays 100 percent of back rent for low- and medium-income people who have fallen behind.

“It puts the burden on the owner to prove the negative,” said Elizabeth Godwin-Jones, who represents landlords in courts throughout the Richmond area. “Tenants



should be coming forward with their declaration. Where's the tenant's obligation to prove that they have?"

Their request to the Supreme Court was prompted by a recent CDC filing in a federal lawsuit challenging the moratorium. In the document, the agency offers a far narrower interpretation of its initial order, writing it does not prohibit landlords from initiating eviction lawsuits and "attempting to demonstrate that a tenant has wrongfully claimed its protections."

With no ruling on that lawsuit, Godwin-Jones acknowledges that the effect of the CDC's filing is limited. But she said the interpretation should at least open the door for landlords to request documentation and proof in court that a tenant meets the program's requirements — an opportunity she says landlords are being denied even in some cases where the tenant appears in court.

Lawyers who represent tenants called the stance troubling and dispute that the CDC's court filings change how the agency's moratorium should be interpreted. Marra, with the Virginia Poverty Law Center, said Virginia is far from the only state where judges are requiring affidavits from landlords. "This is not unique," she said. "Some of the highest courts, in states such as Texas, issued a statewide order to that effect. So nobody is going out on a limb here. Judges are just practicing good law."

Palmer Heenan, an attorney with the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society, argued there's nothing unusual about judges making sure a plaintiff is in compliance with the law before issuing a ruling in a case. "Judges are there not there just to sign papers, but to ensure that the law is being followed," he said. "And this is merely requiring that a landlord certify that they are following the law. ... I don't have any qualms about saying that evictions will increase if this were granted."

Throughout the pandemic, Gov. Ralph Northam has made several requests to the Supreme Court of Virginia to initiate and extend a judicial moratorium on evictions. The court [rejected](#) his last request for an extension in early September, writing that local judges have been alerted to the CDC's moratorium, which expires at the end of the year.

General Assembly lawmakers are [still debating](#) the terms of a state-level moratorium, but the House's proposal also relies on the CDC's moratorium to halt eviction, with state-level protections beginning only when the CDC order ends.

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More than 12,000 eviction cases could head to trial as Virginia rushes to provide rent relief

By **Ned Oliver** - June 25, 2020



A police officer walks into the John Marshall Courthouse in downtown Richmond. (Photo by Ned Oliver/Virginia Mercury)

Gov. Ralph Northam says a rent and mortgage relief program will be ready to launch Monday, the same day courts around the state can begin hearing a backlog of more than 12,000 eviction cases that were put on hold during the coronavirus pandemic.

Advocates called it an impossibly tight turnaround, urging Northam Thursday to extend a state-wide moratorium on evictions until after the relief program goes live and tenants can begin receiving aid.

“These actions are not enough,” wrote the directors of the Virginia Poverty Law Center, Legal Aid Justice Center and New Virginia Majority in a joint letter to the governor. “To stop mass evictions from happening during the current public health crisis, more must be done, so we are again urging you to issue an executive order prohibiting residential evictions until a fully funded, robust rent relief program has been fully implemented and used to reduce the eviction caseloads in courts across Virginia.”

Northam said that he had not asked the Supreme Court of Virginia to extend the moratorium and that he does not plan to pursue a moratorium using his executive powers, which he said would be difficult.

But he did acknowledge that the state could use more time to get the program up and running, asking judges in courthouses around the state to use their authority to extend the moratorium at the local level. It's unclear how many will go along with the request.

Evictions had been put on a de-facto hold since mid-March, when the Supreme Court ordered all routine hearings continued under a "judicial emergency" the justices declared in response to the coronavirus pandemic. But that ended on May 18, when the court told local judges they could begin resuming normal operations. At Northam's request, Chief Justice Don Lemons on June 8 granted a temporary moratorium on eviction cases to give the state time to set up the program.

But Lemons "made very clear that we weren't going to get another extension," said Northam's chief of staff, Clark Mercer.

Mercer said judges in just a few large jurisdictions agreeing to delay resuming eviction cases would give the state the cushion it needs to begin smoothly rolling out the program.

Northam said the state is using \$50 million in federal CARES Act funding to launch what it's dubbed the Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program in partnership with local nonprofit programs.

That's a quarter of the \$200 million that the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development had requested to operate the program. Mercer said the state is pursuing more funding but that the initial allocation is sufficient to launch the program.

Information about how to apply, who will be eligible and the amount of aid that will be provided will be announced Monday. Northam said the program would target outreach in minority communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

"The program will help cover rent and mortgage payments on households who are experiencing financial instability due to the pandemic," he said. "Because we know the pandemic is having a disproportionate health and financial impact on people of color, this program will have an equity lens and target outreach to those communities."

According to data the Supreme Court of Virginia provided Northam's administration, there were 12,337 eviction cases pending in district courts around the state as of the beginning of the month.

Richmond, home of some of the [highest eviction rates in the country](#), has by far the most cases pending, with 1,917 cases waiting to be heard. Newport News, with 1,170 cases pending, and Norfolk, with 1,010, came in second and third.

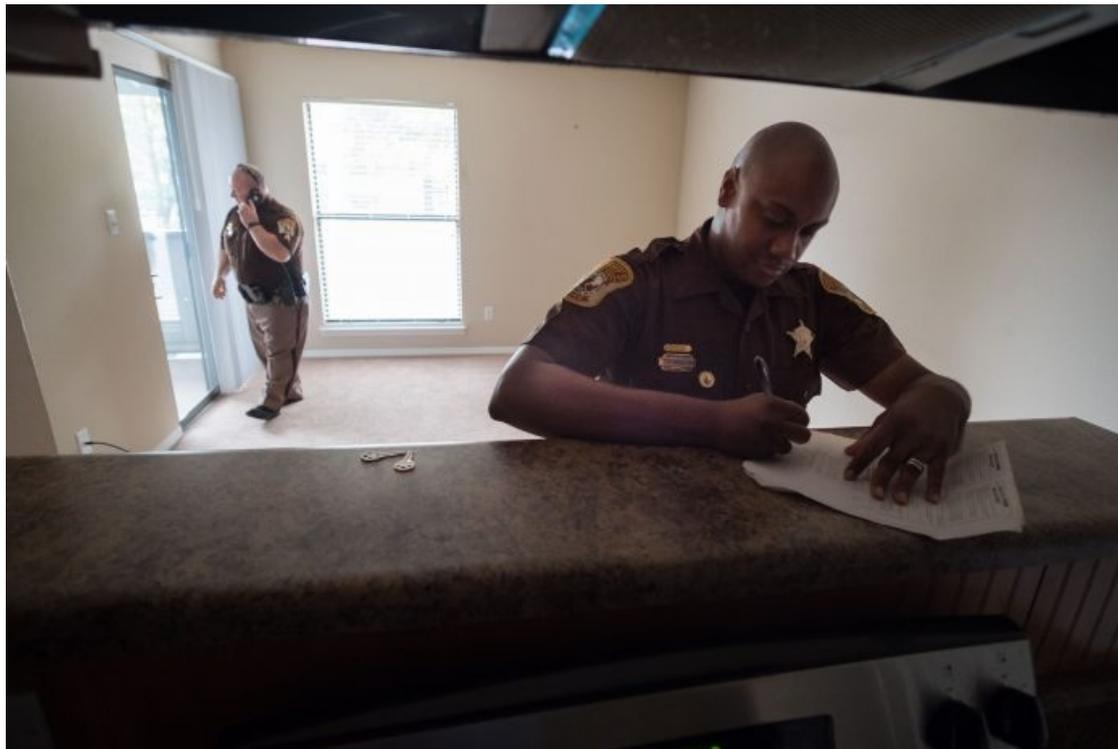
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Some Virginia courts continued to hear eviction cases this week despite emergency order

By **Ned Oliver** - March 20, 2020



Deputies from the Henrico County Sheriff's Department process an eviction on July 12, 2018. The tenants had already departed and the deputies, after checking the unit to make sure it's empty, watch as the owner changes the unit's locks.

The Supreme Court of Virginia [declared a judicial emergency](#) Monday, a sweeping order that has suspended all non-emergency court actions.

It was widely understood to include evictions — a point of particular concern amid pleas that people stay in their homes to avoid spreading COVID-19. But some courts didn't read it that way, continuing to hold hearings this week and, in at least two cases, issuing eviction judgments against tenants.

The confusion prompted the high court's executive secretary to issue a notice to all judges and clerks explicitly instructing them to stop hearing the cases.

"We have received a number of questions ... specifically about eviction proceedings," wrote Karl Hade, the court's top administrator, noting that the order directed courts to delay civil matters, which would include eviction proceedings.

"While new petitions for evictions may be filed, it is anticipated that eviction proceedings will be suspended for the duration of the order as they are not emergency or mission critical proceedings."

Christie Marra, the Virginia Poverty Law Center's director of housing advocacy, said that courts in Fredericksburg, Leesburg, Loudoun and Hanover had all

continued to hear cases.

In Loudoun and Hanover, judgments were issued that could be used to order tenants from their homes.

Until the Supreme Court explicitly told judges to stop scheduling eviction cases, Marra said lawyers were scrambling to respond. “You’re putting people in a position of, ‘I’m going to defend my client or defend myself’ but there are more than 10 people gathered there” in contradiction of guidance issued by state and federal authorities, she said.

A clerk in Hanover’s court confirmed that they had been scheduling the cases but stopped Wednesday after the Supreme Court explicitly addressed the issue.

Tenants have also been confused by the order. More than 45 residents of an apartment complex in Richmond received notice they were being sued for eviction late last week but no indication that the cases would not actually be heard until their city councilman intervened.

Councilman Michael Jones, who represents a ward in the city’s south side, said he received a panicked call about the situation on Tuesday.

“A lot of the residents went up to the office, but they really didn’t get any answers because I think they were just trying to strong arm them,” Jones said.

After he called the management company, he said they consulted with their lawyers and confirmed with the residents that the cases would not be heard. (In a phone call, a representative of the company would only confirm that the cases are being delayed but would not otherwise discuss Jones’ account of their actions.)

But he noted the relief is only temporary and people’s economic situations are only going to get worse.

“You figure the full effect of this pandemic, it’s not even on us yet,” Jones said. “My concern isn’t this first week. ... It’s week two, week three, week four of isolation.”

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HOUSING, WORKING & BUSINESS

FROM THE BULLETIN

Quick hits on news & commentary

Va. Supreme Court rejects Northam's request to extend eviction moratorium

By **Ned Oliver** - September 4, 2020*(Ned Oliver/ Virginia Mercury)*

The Supreme Court of Virginia said Friday it won't extend its order barring residential evictions, which expires Monday.

But in response to a [request sent by Gov. Ralph Northam on Thursday](#), the court wrote that all local judges have been alerted to a federal moratorium issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which bars many evictions through the end of the year.

“Governor Northam is pleased to see the Virginia Supreme Court’s recognition that the federal eviction moratorium is in place through Dec. 31, even if it’s different

from the state-level protections he requested,” Northam’s spokeswoman, Alena Yarmosky, said in a statement.

“I would note that this recent order from the CDC, while welcome, required further review given recent inconsistencies with federal orders. The governor continues to work closely with the General Assembly on legislation that will keep Virginians safety in their homes throughout this health crisis.”

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"the soldiers there, they said, were from the National Guards of Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee and Alabama."

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Graham Moomaw

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One takeaway from the first meeting of the Virginia Redistricting Commission:

The citizen members, who are supposed to be leading, are all brand new to this and said they need a lot more info on what exactly they're supposed to be doing viriniamercury.com/2021/01/21/va-...

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Virginia lawmakers pursue compromise on eviction moratorium

By **Ned Oliver** - August 31, 2020



In early July, Virginia courts had a backlog of more than 12,000 eviction cases as a statewide moratorium expired, with many judges apparently declining a last-minute request from Gov. Ralph Northam to continue the stay at the local level. (Ned Oliver/Virginia Mercury)

Lawmakers in the Virginia Senate appear to be nearing a compromise on a proposed eviction moratorium that advocates hope will head off a wave of homelessness amid widespread job losses and expiring unemployment benefits.

Initial proposals would have barred nearly all evictions through April 30, 2021, and mandated landlords participate in a state rent-relief program that in some cases required them to forgive half the rent they were owed. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle called the approach unworkable as outlined in budget language introduced by Gov. Ralph Northam and legislation proposed by Sen. Ghazala Hashmi, D-Chesterfield.

“To say that there’s no evictions through April – we have to change that dramatically,” said Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw, D-Fairfax, when Northam’s budget language went before lawmakers.

But a revised version of [Hashmi’s bill](#) paired with changes to the state’s rent-relief program have assuaged some of those initial concerns by tying the moratorium to the end of the state of emergency and promising landlords full reimbursement for unpaid rent.

“So I’m not going to say we’re totally thrilled, but it’s getting close to a compromise that is at least livable,” said Patrick McCloud, the president of the Virginia Apartment Management Association, which represents landlords and had vigorously opposed earlier iterations of the program as “an unconstitutional taking.”

Virginia State Sen. Richard Saslaw, D-Fairfax, left, talks with Sen. Tommy Norment, R-James City County, during the Virginia Senate Special Session in the temporary Senate chambers at the Science Museum of Virginia Tuesday Aug. 18, 2020, in Richmond, Va. (AP Photo/Steve Helber/Pool)

Senate lawmakers advanced Hashmi’s bill last week with amendments that allow evictions to proceed against tenants who refuse rental assistance through state or local programs or don’t qualify because they can afford to pay rent without help. It also allows evictions in response to “a criminal or willful act that is not remediable and that poses a threat to health or safety” and requires landlords to inform tenants in writing about the program and how to seek help.

“It is an attempt to provide a moratorium for individuals who are in crisis, especially those who are in crisis as a result of the pandemic,” Hashmi said, noting that researchers at VCU [estimate](#) that more than 260,000 households in Virginia are at risk of eviction.

She also outlined [changes](#) to the rent relief program, which Northam’s administration is funding with \$50 million in CARES Act funding. In addition to providing full reimbursement directly to landlords for all unpaid rent, the revised rules allow landlords to directly apply for the aid on behalf of tenants and open the aid to anyone making less than 80 percent of the area median income, which hovers around \$80,000 a year for a family of four in larger cities and \$60,000 or even less in rural localities.

As launched earlier this year, the program prioritized people making significantly less money and required landlords to either forgive one month rent for every month covered by the state or commit not to evict a tenant for at least six months regardless of whether they continued paying rent – rules landlords said made participation unappealing in many cases.

Hashmi's legislation still has to go before the Senate's Finance Committee, but members of the General Laws Committee who gave it their initial OK on Thursday said the changes had addressed many of their initial concerns.

"It's really about ensuring that we connect those in need with the resources available," said Sen. Jeremy McPike, D-Prince William.

Virginia State Senator Ghazala Hashmi joins the protest rally at the Robert E. Lee Monument in Richmond, Va., June 2, 2020. (Parker Michels-Boyce/ For the Virginia Mercury)

Tenant advocates said they also support the amended bill. "The important thing about Sen. Hashmi's bill is it protects all tenants with the exception of those who pose a real threat to the life and safety of others or who absolutely refuse to seek rental assistance or help the landlord seek rental assistance," said Christie Marra, the Virginia Poverty Law Center's director of housing advocacy. "It isn't a full moratorium, but it's reflective of a compromise."

Some lawmakers and landlords say there are still changes they'd like to see in the final legislation. Among them, greater clarity on how and whether tenants could be evicted if they violate the terms of their lease in ways other than not paying rent. Sen. Monty Mason, D-Williamsburg, wondered specifically what rights a landlord would have if a tenant violated a lease by letting more people move into their home than allowed.

Marra said she would oppose any changes that allow evictions to proceed under such circumstances, as well as changes that might exempt small landlords. “It isn’t good policy and it isn’t realistic to put people out because they’re allowing friends and family to stay with them in the middle of this crisis,” she said.

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