

August 25, 2022

Clerk of The Supreme Court  
Supreme Court of Wisconsin  
P.O Box 1688  
Madison, WI 53701

Dear Clerk of the Wisconsin Supreme Court,

On behalf of United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County, **I write to indicate our support for rule petition 22-03, filed on March 29<sup>th</sup> by Attorney Korey C. Lundin, on behalf of Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc.** This petition asks the court to amend Supreme Court Rules 72.01 and 72.01 to shorten the retention period for eviction cases in which no money judgement is entered.

Milwaukee's eviction crisis, which gained national infamy through work of Matthew Desmond and countless advocates, continues to have lifelong implications for children and families. Data from the last several pre-pandemic years show that in an average year, nearly 14,000 eviction cases are filed in Milwaukee County alone.

Milwaukee County Small Claims Court data indicates families at-risk for evictions are mostly Black and Latino residents in low-income areas. Black women, families with children, and Latino families in mostly White neighborhoods are disproportionately evicted. Citywide, Milwaukee is 38% African American, with a 25% poverty rate. The 10 neighborhoods with the highest eviction rates are 73% African American with a 40% poverty rate.

Under the current system of record retention, an eviction has become a stigma which follows a family forever: it cuts off access to safe, stable housing from reputable landlords and perpetuates the cycle of poverty for generations.

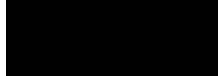
Research by EvictionLab, the American Civil Liberties Union and others confirm that evicted families have worse outcomes in critical determinants, such as economic stability, employment, education, physical and mental health. Those who have been evicted are more likely to:

- Experience homelessness and extended usage of homeless shelters
- Lose wages or jobs (by 30%)
- Suffer from depression and overall health deficits for themselves and their children
- Endure diminished outcomes for their children, who experience chronic absenteeism from school after an eviction, impacting graduation levels and lifelong earning potential.

Fortunately, there are actions we can take to interrupt the lifelong, unintended consequences created by the current record retention procedure. By shortening the retention period for eviction cases in which there is no monetary judgement, these families will have improved opportunities to seek and secure safe and stable housing from reputable landlords.

Everyone in our community – no matter their circumstances or situation – deserves access to safe and stable housing, and equitable treatment from our courts. We ask that you share our support for this request.

Sincerely,



Amy Lindner,  
President & CEO  
United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County