

Members of the Florida Legislature:

The undersigned organizations express our support for legislation that would protect innocent tenants. Here is what we see happening without this protection.

A family in Florida rents a home – this could be an active duty service member or veteran and his or her family, a single mother with kids or an elderly couple. The family is current on their rent; everything they own is in the home. They are unaware that their landlord is pocketing their rent, not paying the mortgage and the home is in foreclosure. Why? Because Florida law provides no requirement that the landlord or property agent tell the tenant that the home they rent is being foreclosed. At the end of the foreclosure, the rent is paid in full. But, the sheriff's office shows up with a writ – *the family has 24 hours to move*.

The dangerous position of tenants in properties being foreclosed became front-page news in Florida with the collapse of the housing market and the subsequent high volume foreclosures, beginning in 2008. Tenants by the hundreds were being immediately evicted at the conclusion of the foreclosure action. The story above was happening over and over again.

Congress addressed this national problem by passing the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act (PTFA) in May 2009. This Act has protected Florida's tenants for five years. The federal PTFA expired on December 31, 2014.

We advocate placing the provisions of the federal law into Florida's Residential Landlord Tenant Act. Without these protections, tenants renting homes that fall into foreclosure are at risk of being set out of their home with 24 hours' notice.

For the past five years the PTFA has worked very well to protect tenants without harming the other parties involved in the foreclosure process. Placing these protections within Florida law will ensure no family, who has otherwise paid their rent in full and abided by both their rental agreement and Florida law, will be set out of their home with only 24 hours notice. No innocent tenant should suffer this fate.

We urge you to support HB 779 and SB 524 to protect Florida's innocent tenants.

STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONS

Alice Vickers, Director
**Florida Alliance for Consumer
Protection**

Jerry Peña, Executive Director
Faith in Florida

Monika J. Woods, Director
**Navy & Marine Corps Relief Society
Jacksonville**

Kaye Schmitz, President and CEO
Florida Prosperity Partnership

Randall C. Berg, Jr., Executive Director
Florida Justice Institute, Inc.

Arthur Rosenberg, Senior Attorney
Florida Legal Services, Inc.

Walt Dartland, Director
**Consumer Federation of the
Southeast**

LEGAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS (Local and Regional)

Robert A. Bertisch, Executive Director
**Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach
County, Inc.**

Karen Josefsberg Ladis, Executive
Director
Dade Legal Aid

Robert L. Johnson, Jr., Executive
Director
Brevard County Legal Aid

Carol A. O'Callaghan, Managing Attorney
Legal Aid Service of Collier County

Mary Anne De Petrillo, Executive
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**Legal Aid Society of the Orange
County Bar Association**

Edward J. Grunewald, Executive
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North Florida Center for Equal Justice

John E. Dubrule, Chief Operating Officer
Gulfcoast Legal Services

Silvia McLain, Executive Director
**Seminole County Bar Association
Legal Aid Society, Inc.**

Andrea Costello, Legal Director
**Legal Advocacy Center of Central
Florida**

Anthony J. Karrat, Executive Director
**Legal Aid Service of Broward County,
Inc.**

James A. Kowalski, Jr., Executive
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Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc.

W. Douglas White, Executive Director
Northwest Florida Legal Services

Andrea Macatangay, Supervising
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**Mission United Veterans Pro Bono
Legal Project**