

SCOTTISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS

General Secretary Rozanne Foyer
Red Tree Business Unit
24 Stonelaw Road
Rutherglen G73 3TW
Tel 0141 337 8100
info@stuc.org.uk www.stuc.org.uk



12th August 2020

Kevin Stewart MSP
Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Minister,

The Scottish Trades Union Congress is increasingly disappointed with the Scottish Government's lack of support for renters. The Coronavirus crisis has starkly displayed the imbalance of support given to those who rent, and those who own properties. The need for redesigning our housing market has never been so desperate as we enter another recession.

The STUC fully supports the content of Pauline McNeil MSP's Fair Rents Bill, a bill that would begin to address the power imbalance between tenants and private landlords by introducing mechanisms that will allow tenants to appeal their rents. The Bill will also require landlords to register rent levels, creating over time a comprehensive database of rents. The Bill would also cap rent rises at one percent above inflation and would give renters increased protection against extortionate or unfair rent increases.

We are extremely disappointed that the Bill was blocked by SNP and Tory members of Holyrood's Local Government Committee. While short-term

measures were put in place to prevent evictions during the Covid19 crisis, there are currently no other active proposals currently proposed to support renters. The SNP have the opportunity to take on the Bill and put those protections in place and support hard-pressed tenants.

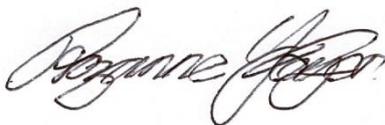
With precarious work increasing, and low pay remaining endemic, many workers are facing a triple of whammy of a fall in relative wages, increases in rent and high fuel bills.

The Coronavirus crisis has laid bare these pre-existing inequalities and the urgency to bring forward a new housing policy with fairness for renters at its core has never been greater. So far, support for renters has been woefully inadequate. During this pandemic, landlords have been able to enjoy mortgage holidays, while renters have simply been left in the dark and advised to negotiate with their landlords over missed rent. In addition to supporting the bill, we are urging the Scottish Government to put in place an extended eviction ban until next April.

Workers in Scotland have been the backbone of society during the Coronavirus crisis, they do not deserve to have to worry about rent increases, evictions, and homelessness on top of their worries about their health and livelihoods.

We have an opportunity to begin to re-address the imbalance of power between renters and landlords, squandering this opportunity would have dire consequences for Scotland's workers and communities.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rozanne Foyer', written in a cursive style.

Rozanne Foyer
General Secretary
Scottish Trades Union Congress

