

BRIEFING

News

Ford signals reforms coming to Landlord and Tenant Board

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By Barbara Patrocino



Premier Doug Ford takes speaks during a press conference about police helicopter funding in Mississauga, Ont., on Monday, July 29, 2024. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Frank Gunn

Premier Doug Ford says changes could be coming to the province's rental rules, arguing the "pendulum has swung" against small, independent landlords, who are

grappling with issues like non-paying tenants.

Ford on Wednesday said he's been discussing with Attorney General Doug Downey possible reforms to the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) — a quasi-judicial body that regulates rental disputes — to address these concerns.

"I spent an hour with my attorney general yesterday, just running through the agenda, and I think the pendulum has swung the other way, especially for small landlords," he told reporters.

"These poor folks, they save up everything they have, they buy one extra condo or maybe a house and someone goes in there and they don't pay rent.

"I'm not talking about the big ones that have 300 apartment buildings or whatever; I'm talking about the little ones that end up losing their house or losing their condo because they can't pay the mortgage because the people aren't paying rent," Ford added.

"What we're trying to do is to expedite the process, and make sure we'd get it through the system as quickly as possible when someone's not paying."

Ford's remarks come at a time when many small landlords have voiced frustrations over long delays at the LTB.

Reports show that both landlords and tenants are facing extended wait times for case resolutions, with some disputes taking over a year to settle.

This has brought criticism from small landlords, many of whom own just one or two properties, and often lack the resources to absorb these losses.

These disputes, according to the Small Ownership Landlords of Ontario (SOLO), who represent close to 8000 landlords across Ontario, have become distressingly common, particularly with so-called "professional tenants" who manipulate the system to avoid paying rent while dragging out the legal process.

Last year, the Ford government announced a \$6.5 million investment to increase staff and adjudicators to handle the growing number of cases, and teased potentially introducing measures to fast-track evictions in situations where rent payments have been withheld for more than two months.

But landlords and tenant advocates remain skeptical about whether these changes will sufficiently address the deeper issues at the LTB.

"When the tenant is not paying we lose 100 per cent of our rental income, 50 per cent if you have a duplex, 33 per cent if you have a triplex, but it is always a very significant amount," said Boubah Bah, chair of the SOLO board.

"The way the system is set up now, the LTB has exclusive jurisdiction in Ontario, according to the residential tenant Act, to mediate any dispute within a landlord and a tenant, so we have been asking for a change for the last five years. 80 to 90 per cent of the cases at the LTB are for non payment of rent. That's where the backlog started," he added.

This situation is unfolding against the backdrop of the government's broader housing policies, which seek to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031, partly by encouraging small landlords to provide quality rental units.

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