

Good morning Chairman Silvestri and members of the Committee,

My name is Tom Benedetto, Government Affairs Director for the Chicagoland Apartment Association (CAA).

CAA is an affiliate of the National Apartment Association and represents owners and managers of over 1500 apartment properties and 235,000+ rental units throughout the state, mostly in Cook County. Our members own and manage all types of rental apartments including market-rate, affordable, student, and senior housing.

Let me first say that poor housing conditions are *unacceptable* in Cook County and this will always be CAA's position. That said, the Cook County RTLO in front of you today fails to achieve the correct balance of ensuring a quality standard without excessive administrative burdens, building costs, and unscrupulous lawsuits. Not to mention slower leasing processes, increased delinquencies, and higher housing costs for tenants.

If the ordinance passes today it will be effective on June 1<sup>st</sup> (the busiest time of the year for our members). So, to ease the operational burdens this will impose on multifamily, an essential industry, and in the spirit of achieving a balance, we still ask for two minor changes.

First, making the requirements of Sec 42-805 (b) (3) subject to a prospective tenant's request. And second, amending the term of "60 days" in Sec 42-809 (C) (2) to "75 days" to give landlords a slightly longer runway to set up the next lease term with a tenant. These changes would go a long way in dampening the opposition of landlords, without stripping any rights from tenants.

Balance is the key here, especially considering we are amid an unprecedented pandemic and recession in which our industry has been asked to absorb tremendous costs.

We have risen to meet that challenge, but almost one year in, housing providers are at a financial breaking point. Now, we are left with an ordinance that will add to the immense list of challenges our industry has been navigating since March of 2020.

While we greatly appreciated the negotiating sessions facilitated by Chairman Silvestri, and the willingness of the sponsors to listen, this is pouring salt in the wound of housing providers.

Make no mistake, the RTLO will come at a steep price for both tenants and landlords. The latest academic evidence is clear: ordinances governing habitability standards unequivocally lead to unintended consequences, including higher rent.

Please consider these reasonable amendments that will ease the burdens of landlords and balance the ordinance as a whole, as we all continue to navigate the stresses of a global pandemic.

Thank you for your time.