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My name is Ambre Marr with AARP Indiana and this is an important issue for older Hoosiers because housing is central to an individual's well-being and to making our communities more livable. We believe housing should be maintained to ensure the health and safety of all residents, including older adults.

When it comes to landlords not paying utility bills on time or making essential repairs, that is a red flag that needs to be addressed and it is critical to offer adequate protection and safety for tenants. Low-quality housing can pose risks to residents' health and safety, particularly vulnerable populations. A large majority of older Hoosiers wants to stay in their homes and communities as they age, but some are concerned that they will not be able to do so. Safe, accessible housing allows people to remain in their communities as their needs change.

An AARP Indiana volunteer, Tish Biggs is a former landlord who couldn't make today's press conference, but wanted me to pass along her thoughts on this issue. She was prepared to testify in committee had the bill been heard in its original form and if testimony had been allowed.

She said:

*"As a former resident and landlord in Ohio for 25 years, I can attest that providing a court-ordered escrow provision like Ohio has, protects the tenant and keeps landlords apprised of significant repairs that the landlord can remedy. As a landlord, it was always in the best interest of our rental properties to keep them in good repair. Our tenants never had to use the escrow provision of Ohio the law but it was there if they needed it.*

*"When we moved to Indiana we were no longer able to monitor our 27 units like we did when we lived close to the properties. Becoming an absentee landlord did not allow us to service our properties and our tenants. So, rather than neglect our tenants and properties we sold all of the properties."*

Most landlords, no matter which state they have properties, are like Tish. And as she can attest to the fact that, court-ordered rent escrow doesn't harm landlords who take care of their properties.

Thank you.

