



State Representative Mark Johnson
Sponsor Testimony - House Bill 93
House Criminal State and Local Committee
April 2nd, 2023

Chairman John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 93.

Thank you Representative McClain for going over the history and intent of this bill. My office has received similar calls from constituents requesting an update on the progress of the language introduced in the last General Assembly. I have always seen this bill as a common sense measure, and I'm happy to be joint sponsoring it this GA with Representative McClain.

Since we introduced this bill we have spoken with a few groups on how to improve on the language and enforcement mechanisms so to make sure we are holding tenants accountable for their delinquent payments while also ensuring the most appropriate government body will be handling these cases after it is signed into law. That is why our offices are currently looking at possible amendments or a sub bill, and I would like to brief the committee on those now.

The first amendment brought to our attention removes language requiring county treasurers to immediately certify paid amounts to the municipality and instead allows treasurers to make payments in accordance with the normal biannual tax payment and remittance schedule. It removes language added in House Rules & Reference Committee allowing payments to be made to municipalities "in the manner chosen by the municipality". Instead, we are proposing payments be made in accordance with the normal tax collection process. It will also remove language requiring county treasurers to collect disposal and sewer liens as separate payments as this would be a huge administrative burden on the treasurers and may require expensive software changes.

The other amendment currently being drafted simply states that county courts will be the body that reviews appeals submitted by landlords claiming their former tenants are responsible for the utility payments. The current language has the Environmental Review Appeals Commission handling this responsibility, but my Joint Sponsor and I feel this is a local matter that is best handled by local courts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I will now be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.