



Clerk of the Supreme Court
PO Box 1688
Madison, WI 53701

To Whom It May Concern:

The League of Women Voters- Beloit is a non-partisan, non-profit organization with nearly 70 members which studies issues and then advocates for them. The LWV-Beloit supports Rule Petition 22-03, which would reduce the length of time eviction records are held. Twenty years is a long time to have an eviction record which did not result in a money judgment on file. Though most eviction cases don't result in a person being evicted, the record of that case will continue to impact the tenant for decades. We support lessening such records from twenty years to one year. As one of our members exclaimed, "Even bankruptcy doesn't last that long!"

We have studied the housing and the homelessness issue here in our area, and believe this change would improve people's chances of being able to rent and would decrease homelessness. Currently, about 50% of our residents rent a house or apartment, and there are not enough rentals people can afford. The new apartments here in Beloit are too expensive. Since the passage of Act 176 (2016) it is difficult for the city to enforce housing codes if landlords don't maintain their property. Some of us were census takers, and were shocked at the state of some of the property renters must endure. Renters have no recourse in such situations due to the lack of housing and the lack of support for ensuring landlords take care of their property, and they cannot bring suits against them. Landlords can pay for lawyers in eviction cases, but renters cannot afford legal defense.

In supporting this petition, we are relying on our past study and consensus on eviction and housing and of homelessness. We also rely on LWVWI's position on social policy which supports action to combat poverty and discrimination and to provide equal opportunity for housing.

This change will give more renters better access to better housing, because landlords will have more current information; they will not have to guess if someone had an eviction without any judgment or with a money judgment, five years ago or fifteen years ago, and it will enable renters to be treated more fairly. We know that women with children, particularly women of color experience more problems with paying their rent or with eviction issues. We hope this will give families a better chance for better housing.

Sincerely,

Susan E. Adams, Ph.D.
Secretary and Action Chair