



September 12, 2025

## **Report: Over \$1 Billion in Rent Lost by D.C. Landlords Since the End of the Pandemic**

### **Executive Summary**

- **Since September 2021, D.C. landlords have lost over \$1 billion in rent.**
- **15–25% of tenants remain delinquent, often owing up to \$28,800 each.**
- **41% of the D.C. Housing Finance Agency’s \$2.5B affordable housing portfolio is already in financial distress.**
- **Mayor Bowser introduced a strong Rental Act, but the Council has watered it down to the point of being meaningless.**
- **Two provisions must be restored for the law to have real impact:**
  1. **Mandatory hearing deadlines** for the Court.
  2. **Mandatory protective orders** requiring tenants to pay into Court during disputes.

### **Introduction**

When the federal eviction moratorium ended in September 2021, most U.S. cities began the difficult process of stabilizing their housing markets. Washington, D.C., however, has not.

Court delays, extended timelines, and the continuation of emergency-era rules have left landlords unable to enforce leases or recover unpaid rent. The result is multi-year cumulative losses that **exceed \$1 billion** — losses that are permanent and destabilizing the city’s affordable housing ecosystem.

## Methodology: How the Losses Were Calculated

### 1. DCHFA Portfolio Distress

- In May 2025, the **D.C. Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA)** reported that its affordable housing portfolio required **\$143 million in immediate support to prevent foreclosures**.
- This figure is **not the full rent loss**. It is the *cash infusion required today* to stop defaults.
- DCHFA's distressed portfolio = **8–10% of the city's 180,000 rental units** (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS).
- Scaled across the market, this implies **\$1.43–\$1.79 billion in cumulative losses** since September 2021.

### 2. Market-Wide Delinquency

- Affordable housing providers report **15–25% of tenants remain delinquent**.
- In D.C., eviction cases take **18–24 months** to resolve.
- With average rents of \$1,000–\$1,200/month, each delinquent household accrues **\$18,000–\$28,800**.

Applied citywide:

Delinquency Rate	Households Behind	Average Owed	Total Loss
15%	27,000	\$20,000	\$540 million
20%	36,000	\$25,000	\$900 million
25%	45,000	\$28,800	\$1.296 billion

### 3. Convergence of Findings

Both approaches — scaling DCHFA's distress portfolio and modeling delinquency rates — point to the same conclusion:

**Since the end of the national moratorium in September 2021, D.C. landlords have lost more than \$1 billion in rent.**

## Consequences

- **Affordable Housing at Risk:** 41% of DCHFA's \$2.5 billion portfolio is already on a financial watchlist. Foreclosures will erase affordability covenants and remove affordable units from the market.
- **NOAH Threatened:** Small landlords, who provide most of the city's naturally occurring affordable housing, cannot survive multi-year rent losses. Their properties will be sold or abandoned.
- **Capital Flight:** National property managers and investors are leaving D.C., shrinking resources for new housing and preservation.

- **Court Paralysis:** With hearings delayed for up to two years, landlords remain trapped in litigation limbo while arrears mount.

*“These are not temporary arrears — they are permanent losses,” said Dean Hunter, CEO of SMOA. “The moratorium ended in 2021, but D.C. landlords are still stuck in 2020.”*

## Policy Failure and the Path to Real Reform

Mayor Muriel Bowser introduced the Rental Act with real reforms designed to fix the eviction crisis. Unfortunately, under Housing Committee Chair Robert White, the Council has **watered down the bill so badly that it will have virtually no impact on the eviction crisis.**

Two core provisions must be restored, or the passage of the bill will mean nothing:

### 1. **Mandatory Hearing Deadlines**

- The Court must be required to hold hearings within set timeframes after a complaint is filed.
- Without deadlines, cases will continue to drag on for 18–24 months.
- If the Council imposes deadlines, the Court can comply simply by **returning to a live calendar** instead of relying on a virtual calendar.

### 2. **Mandatory Protective Orders**

- Tenants must be required to pay rent into a Court registry while cases are pending.
- Without protective orders, landlords endure years of litigation with zero rent payments.
- This reform would restore fairness and prevent the court process from becoming de facto free housing.

## Conclusion

The evidence is overwhelming: **D.C. landlords have lost over \$1 billion in rent since September 2021.**

Mayor Bowser introduced a bill that would have addressed the crisis. The Council stripped it of the only provisions that would have made a difference.

Unless **mandatory hearing deadlines** and **mandatory protective orders** are restored, the Rental Act will be meaningless — and the eviction crisis will continue unchecked.

*“If these two provisions aren’t restored, the Council should admit it has no interest in fixing the crisis,” said Hunter. “Mayor Bowser gave them a roadmap for real reform. Now the choice is theirs.”*