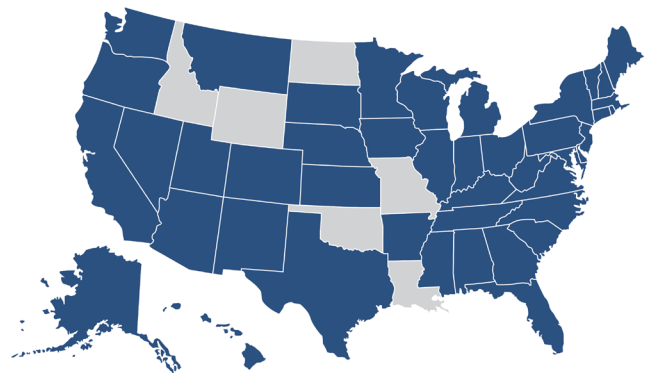


Oklahoma renters need protection against landlord retaliation

- **HB 2109** would ensure renters aren't punished for attempting to rectify health and safety violations.
- Oklahoma is one of only six states that does not protect a tenant from retaliation from their landlord for lodging a complaint about health and safety concerns in their rental.¹
- 1 in 3 Oklahoma households live in rental properties and could be evicted simply for requesting their landlord to make needed repairs. An eviction filing – even one that is not granted – will stay on a person's record and show up on tenant screenings that likely will make it harder to find housing in the future.²
- Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have a state law prohibiting landlord retaliation. An example of retaliation would be terminating a lease after a tenant files a request for a major repair with the landlord.
- As an example of an anti-retaliation law, a landlord in Texas may not retaliate against a tenant for asking the landlord to repair or fix something, filing a complaint with a government agency, taking part in any tenant advocacy group, or doing anything allowed by the lease or the law.³
- Retaliatory action could include filing an eviction, ending a lease, increasing rent or denying use of premises or services.
- An eviction or lease termination can lead to a snowball effect that challenges economic and family stability. These would include difficulty finding new housing, job disruption or longer transit times to find affordable housing, and school disruption for children of the household.⁴
- Evictions are associated with increased risk of homelessness, emergency room use, and mental health hospitalization.⁵

Only 6 states lack tenant protection statutes



Source: Nolo

NOTE: Arkansas' anti-retaliation law applies only to landlords who have received a notice of lead-based paint on the property.

"I didn't feel like I had the power or the authority in this situation until I found out what the law was. And then when I argued it, I still felt [like] I was at the mercy of if they decided to follow the law or not, because I didn't have the money to hire legal aid."

-Dezmond Harris, a Tulsa renter, speaking about his experience with Oklahoma's lack of tenant protections. Harris was told to pay a \$2,000 penalty to his property managers in order to move out of his roach- and rodent-infested apartment complex.

1 "State Laws Prohibiting Landlord Retaliation", NOLO (2023).

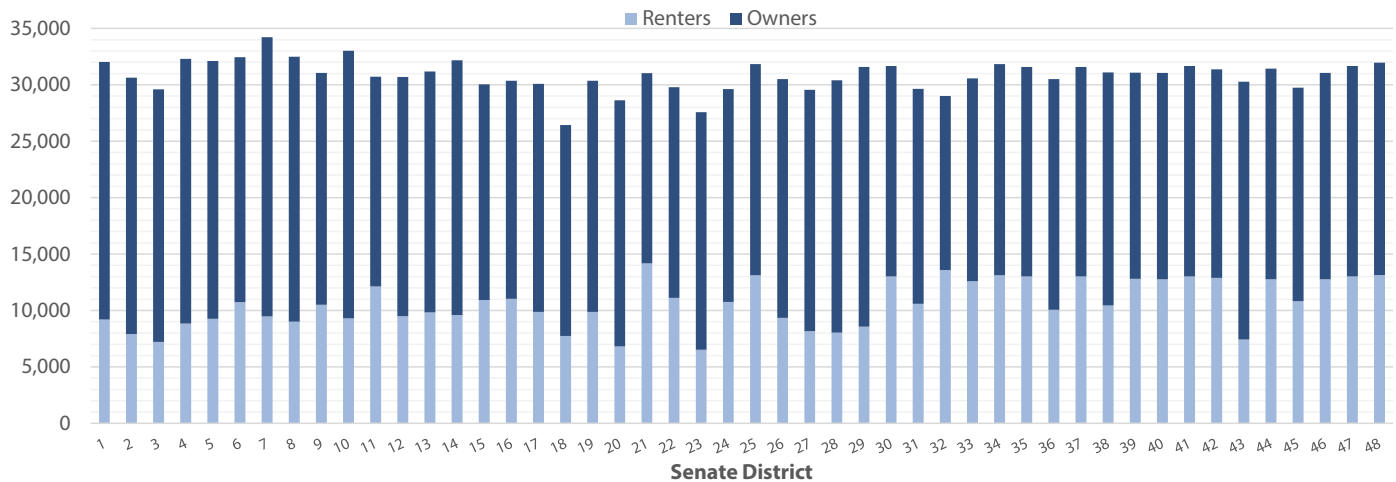
2 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2020).

3 "Landlord Retaliation Against Tenants", TexasLawHelp.org (2023).

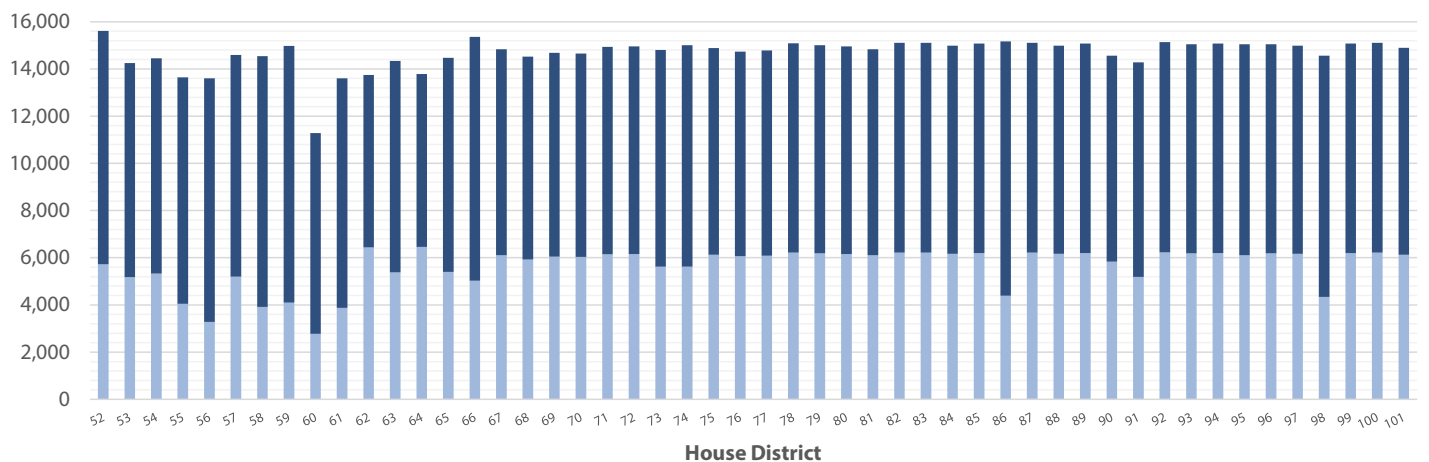
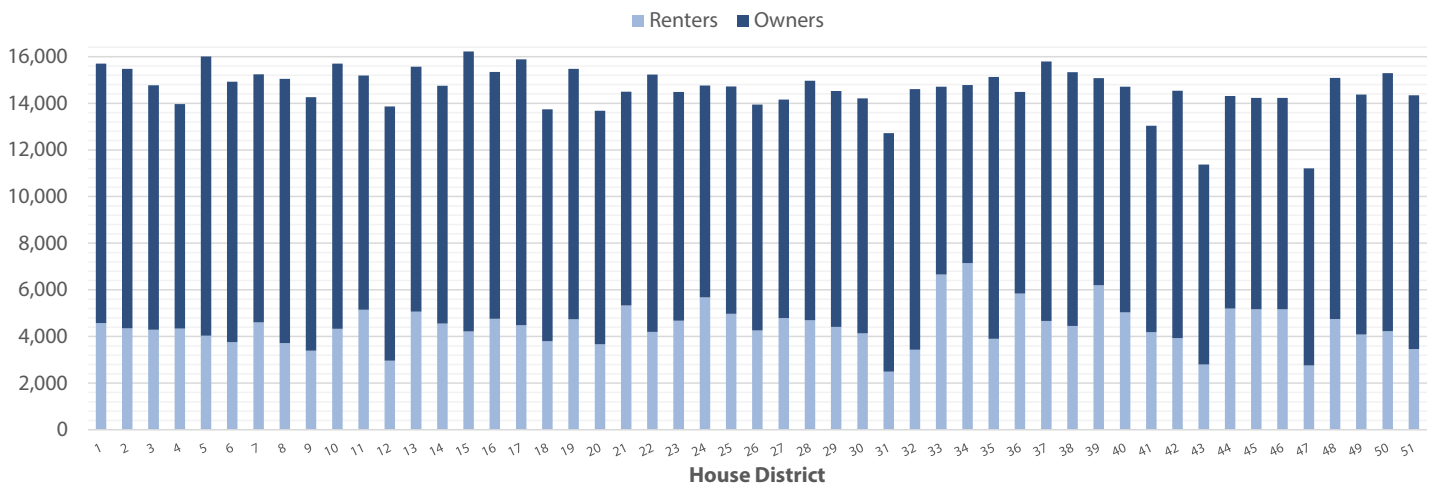
4 "Are renters — and the U.S. economy — hurtling toward an 'eviction cliff'?", Berkeley News (2021).

5 "Eviction And Health: A Vicious Cycle Exacerbated By A Pandemic", Health Affairs (2021).

Estimates of Renters/Owners by Senate District



By House District



Source: OK Policy analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2019 and Oklahoma Legislature House and Senate District reports

