

# House Bill 404 Safe at Home Act

## Issue:

Georgia's outdated and inadequate housing laws contribute to unsafe and dangerous rental housing conditions for hundreds of thousands of Georgia's children and their families. State law does not require that rented apartments and homes meet minimum health and safety standards. Tenants in unsafe properties have little to no effective recourse. In addition, tenants have no grace period to cure lease violations, and face some of the highest eviction rates in the country.



## Solution:

**Georgia should pass House Bill 404 to amend Chapter 7 of Title 44 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated "Safe at Home Act" to provide that residential rental properties must be fit for human habitation.**

## Key Benefits of House Bill 404:

- Requires rental properties to be "fit for human habitation."
- Caps security deposits at two months' rent.
- Provides tenants a three-day grace period ("right to cure") before a landlord can file for an eviction in court.
- Includes "cooling" as a utility that cannot be shut off before eviction proceedings conclude.

## What Data Shows

### Georgia Falls Behind

- Georgia is one of **only three states without an enforceable warranty of habitability.**
- Georgia's **eviction rate is the 6th highest** in the country, **11% higher than the national average.**

### Statewide Crisis

Severe housing problems (like lack of plumbing or kitchen facilities) impact at least 582,000 Georgia households, according to our estimate and the United Health Care Foundation and U.S. Census data. That's 15.2% of Georgia homes (and 21% for Black families) – a higher percentage than Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Mississippi.

### Development Suffers

Studies demonstrate that housing instability threatens healthy child development and academic achievement. In 2022, more than 13,000 school-age children in Metro Atlanta were living in chronically dangerous apartment complexes. (Atlanta Journal Constitution)

### Costly Health Impacts

Poor housing conditions cause widespread health problems, particularly asthma – 9.6% of Georgia's children suffer from asthma, nearly 50% higher than the national average, resents of millions in hospital costs each year.

### Families Destabilized

According to a report by the Georgia Department of Education, one-fifth of children in Georgia's foster care system were removed from their families because of inadequate housing.



**GEORGIA APPLESEED**  
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