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## Toledo City Council approves protections for renters

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A divided Toledo City Council voted Tuesday to join at least six other Ohio cities in adding source of income to its law against housing discrimination, which means landlords will no longer be able to deny someone a lease simply because they used a public voucher to pay rent.

Councilman Nick Komives, who proposed the change, said the new law won't take effect for another 120 days in order to give housing organizations such as Toledo's Fair Housing Center, Lucas Metropolitan Housing, and The Ability Center of Greater Toledo time to educate both landlords and tenants alike.

But four dissenting councilmen said Tuesday they would have liked landlords to have more time to express concerns about the legislation. Council President Matt Cherry and councilmen Rob Ludeman, Chris Delaney, and Cerssandra McPherson voted against it.

Mr. Ludeman said he was bothered by what he characterized as an insinuation that “landlords are the source of all evils in the city of Toledo.” He added that he believes a representative from Toledo’s Democratic Socialists of America circulated petitions in favor of the change, which worried him.

“If they, in fact, are one of the main forces behind this ordinance, we should all be very scared because one of the primary tenants of the Democratic Socialist Party is to eliminate for-profit organizations,” he said.

Councilman Tiffany Preston Whitman said she was proud to vote in favor of the legislation because it removes barriers to housing, which she called a basic need. “We need to work toward eliminating systematic discrimination in our society,” she said. “I also feel like it’s a way to signal to people who are moving here that we are a welcoming and inclusive community. I’m very proud of the legislation we passed today.”

In other housing business, city council unanimously approved what is commonly called pay-to-stay legislation, which gives tenants who are being sued for eviction because of rent delinquency a stronger defense if they can show they tried to pay their arrears in full. Many area landlords said this is already common practice, but the city council vote codifies it.