

#038

From: Vincent Buonanno <Buonannov@dca.njoag.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 4:03 PM
To: WebMaster Mailbox <webmaster.mbx@njcourts.gov>
Subject: [External]Special Committee on Impending Landlord-Tenant Crisis : Comment

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the Judiciary organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To: Glenn A. Grant, Administrator of NJ Courts

From: Vincent Buonanno, State Investigator

Date: 5/18/21

Re: Special Court Committee on the Pending Landlord-Tenant Crisis

Dear Mr. Grant:

Having reviewed the Special Committee's report on the impending eviction crisis, while inclusive from a judicial standpoint, nonetheless stops short regarding the circumstances of the actual eviction. The courts, the lawyers, landlords and especially the tenants (evictees) involved, need to be aware that an eviction, which predominantly although not exclusively, involves the removal of persons as well as all of their household goods. In New Jersey, such removal can only be performed either by the tenants themselves, or by a state licensed public mover. **This is not a tangential or minor issue.**

As the regulatory officer for all public movers in this state, I would have the committee be made aware that I have already been dealing with complaints from tenants/evictees/consumers regarding their eviction, either from a residence or from a self-storage unit. In many of these instances, the landlord or evicting party usually employs an informal means, a "clean out" or "rubbish removal" outfit, with no legitimate business credentials other than the fact that they work cheap. Moreover, it has been my professional experience that the evicting officer (usually from the county sheriff's office), is either negligent or ignorant in the performance of that particular duty, leaving both the mover and the evictee in a quandary, adding to the grief and stress already inherent in such a situation. The evicting officer should remain present during the eviction; often they do not, simply serving the warrant for removal and then leaving. Regarding this latter situation, I would inform the committee that the Division of Consumer Affairs ("DCA") will be sending a circular letter to all 21 county sheriff offices to emphasize this matter. The DCA does not need to be saddled with unnecessary complaints, nor do evictees need unnecessary grief---provided everyone does their job properly.

Also, the Special Court Committee may wish to consider the particular circumstances of the self-storage industry. The self-storage industry, which has available about 40k units in New Jersey, **is not a state a regulated industry**. Consequently, regulations with respect to consumer protection is minimal. A common industry practice is now to auction goods via a regular on-line schedule. Rare is the in-person "storage wars" auction. This leaves precious little time for consumer recourse. It may very well be, given the high number of self-storage facilities in this state, that auctions will rival or even exceed as evictions. To that end, I would inform the Special Court Committee that earlier in this year I contacted the NJ Self-Storage Association to plead for an informal delayed payment schedule of 60 to 90 days in indigent cases. My plea was politely refused.

Respectfully submitted,

VINCENT A. BUONANNO, State Investigator

NJ Division of Consumer Affairs
124 Halsey St., 7th Fl.
Newark, NJ 07101
973.504.6442