

November 6, 2021

The Honorable Max Baer
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
c/o Office of the Prothonotary
468 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RE: RESPONSE IN SUPPORT OF PENNSYLVANIA SUPREME COURT ORDER NO. 21 EM
AUTHORIZATION FOR CONTINUATION OF THE PHILADELPHIA MUNICIPAL COURT
LANDLORD-TENANT DIVERSION PROGRAM

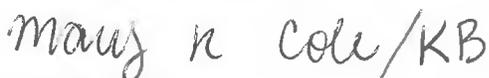
Dear Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania,

I have been a voluntary mediator for the Eviction Diversion Program in Philadelphia for a little over a year and I am writing to you to request your ongoing support for the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution in eviction proceedings. I and many others appreciate your leadership in continuing to extend authority for Philadelphia to require landlords to apply for rental assistance and participate in Philadelphia's pre-filing Eviction Diversion Program, most recently per your Order of October 28, 2021, No. 21 EM 2020. Continuation of this authority beyond November 30, 2021, is urgently needed, not only in Philadelphia but also in other counties to enable all residents to benefit from collaboration between the courts, rental assistance and other stabilizing measures. Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Court issue a rule allowing a local county's President Judge to issue its own local rule creating or coordinating with Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedures in eviction proceedings, should they choose to do so.

My experience as a voluntary mediator for Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program has been enormously gratifying because of its success in assisting both landlords and tenants and, more important, has prevented a crush of eviction filings which are less than a third of what they were pre- pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to extend the Court's most recent Order of October 28, 2021, beyond November 30, 2021, requiring Philadelphia landlords to apply for rental assistance and participate in Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program.

Respectfully Submitted,


Mary K. Cole, Esq.