



Mississippi Center for Justice

For Immediate Release

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MCJ confronts Landlords who Attempt to Unlawfully Skirt Executive Order by Cutting Utilities

Lee County, Mississippi – The Mississippi Center for Justice is representing multiple tenants who are being effectively evicted from their residences without warning while Mississippi is calling for residents to stay at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yesterday, Governor Reeves' executive order directed that Mississippi residents stay at home except in specific circumstances; it also called for a moratorium on evictions beginning at 5:00 PM on April 3, 2020. Landlords in Lee County – and perhaps elsewhere in Mississippi – are attempting to subvert the intent of these orders by disconnecting utilities that are in the landlords' names. Without utilities, tenants are unable to comply with the stay-at-home order and face unnecessary risks to their own health and their communities during a time of pandemic.

The Mississippi Center for Justice has filed suit on behalf of two Lee County tenants to restore utility service to their apartments that had been disconnected by the landlord, arguing that the landlords' actions were contrary to their statutory duties and to the goal of Governor Reeves's stay-at-home order yesterday and the Mississippi Public Service Commission's previous order that utilities not be disconnected due to non-payment during the COVID-19 emergency.

Renters throughout Mississippi need to know their rights during this unprecedented time. If renters suspect that they are being unlawfully evicted, or that their utilities have been cut off recently, they are encouraged to contact the Mississippi Center for Justice.

The Mississippi Center for Justice is a public service law firm that fights discrimination and economic and social injustice through legal representation, policy advocacy, and community education.