

**BABETTE JOSEPHS**, DEMOCRATIC MEMBER  
MAJORITY CHAIR,  
STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE 182ND DISTRICT

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300 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING  
R.O. BOX 202182  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2182  
PHONE: 717.787.8529  
FAX: 717.787.5066  
E-MAIL: Rep.Josephs@pahouse.net  
WEB SITE: www.babette.org

1528 WALNUT STREET, SUITE 501  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19102  
PHONE: 215.893.1515  
FAX: 215.560.5816

**House of Representatives**  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

**MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** September 12, 2012  
**To:** All House Members  
**From:** Rep. Babette Josephs *Babette*  
**Subject:** Co-sponsorship – Online Rental Payments

I will soon be introducing legislation that would amend the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951 to include language prohibiting landlords from requiring all payments to be made electronically.

Recently, constituents from my district, particularly the elderly, have communicated to me their concerns over hardship incurred by changes to their rental agreements by their landlords requiring all rent payments to be made online. Many of these people are long-time tenants who do not own computers, have Internet access, or possess computer literacy. By being forced to either obtain Internet access at their own personal expense or make alternative arrangements to pay their rent at risk of being evicted, they are being unfairly and unnecessarily inconvenienced. Further, some are concerned that their landlords are attempting to push them out of their leases in favor of younger, shorter term tenants paying higher rates. These "Direct Debit" policies (which force you to make payments "at your own risk," meaning tenants are on their own if they suffer losses due to stolen identity) discriminate against elderly citizens who are the most likely to not use the Internet or have a bank check card.

As it stands, the Landlord and Tenant Act contains no language providing for what is and is not considered to be an acceptable form of rent payment. I believe it is necessary to require landlords to accept at least one form of payment that is neither cash nor an electronic funds transfer from a Web site such as PayPal to ensure our elderly can continue to pay their rents unmolested by unilateral alterations to rental agreements unnecessarily forcing them to inconvenience themselves to do something as simple as pay their rent when check and/or money order had previously been accepted for the duration of their terms as per their rental agreements.

A similar bill was recently introduced in the California Senate and signed into law by their governor. It enjoyed bipartisan support and passed the Senate unanimously. Pennsylvanians deserve the same peace of mind that comes with being able to pay their rent without fear of eviction each month. Please join me in ensuring it for them.

If you wish to co-sponsor this bill, please contact Kim Hileman at [khileman@pahouse.net](mailto:khileman@pahouse.net) or 787-8529.

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