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POLIS EXTENDS STATE'S EVICTION PROTECTIONS BEFORE END OF FEDERAL MORATORIUM. One day before a federal eviction moratorium expired, Gov. Jared Polis extended state protections, ensuring tenants who are applying for rental assistance cannot be evicted for at least 30 days after the moratorium ends Saturday.

Under an executive order that takes effect Sunday — basically as soon as the federal moratorium expires — landlords must provide tenants with 30 days of notice before evicting them for not paying rent. During those 30 days, tenants can stop the eviction by showing they are awaiting money from a rental assistance fund.

Polis had been mum this week before Saturday's expiration, even after a bipartisan group of mayors urged him to extend state protections. In his absence, two housing providers along East Colfax Avenue announced Thursday that they will not evict tenants applying for assistance.

— *Justin Wingerter, The Denver Post*

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Nearly 100,000 face loss of benefits

As end nears for federal unemployment programs, state sees lowest claim count since pandemic

By Aldo Svaldi

The Denver Post

In five weeks, three key federal benefit programs are set to end. Based on current counts, that could leave 98,000 Colorado residents without their primary source of unemployment benefits and an additional 36,000 without a supplemental \$300 a week in federal assistance, according to a weekly update from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.

The final number cutoff likely won't be that high, given that the state has 111,173 job openings posted on ConnectingColorado.com, its online job database, and initial unemployment claims continue to drop.

That of course, assumes the quickly spreading delta variant doesn't force another round of business closures.

Initial claims for regular state unemployment dropped to 3,317 for the week ending July 24, the lowest count since the pandemic started. That contrasts with 104,217 claims at the peak on the week that ended April 11, 2020, and an average of 1,900 claims a week in 2019.

"We are thrilled to see the number of weekly initial claims filed back on a downward trajectory and nearing our pre-pandemic levels," Joe Barela, executive director of the CDLE, said in a release. "As Colorado's economy begins to rebound, we're focused now on connecting Coloradans to available work opportunities before the federally funded pandemic benefits end in the coming weeks."

About 36,030 Coloradans collected regular state unemployment benefits during the week ended July 17, which remains about double the weekly rate averaged in 2019. That state program, however, will continue past the Sept. 6 deadline set for federal unemployment programs under the American Recovery Act.

There were 1,119 initial claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, a program that provides unemployment compensation to self-employed workers who otherwise aren't eligible for state benefits, for the week ending July 27.

That contrasts with more than 40,906 claims on the peak week of April 25, 2020.

That new program, introduced for the first time during the pandemic, still had 25,223 continuing claims the week ended July 17, meaning a significant number of people face a cut-off in September if they don't find an alternative source of income before then.

Eligible self-employed workers can still file an initial claim for up to 30 days beyond the deadline, but only against income lost during the full weeks prior to the deadline.

Federal Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, which assists the long-term un-

employed who have exhausted their regular state benefits, is also set to go away. It supported 72,889 recipients the week ending July 17, and the number of claimants there has been on the rise the past three weeks.

A third program, Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, provides about 36,000 Colorado residents with an additional \$300 a week in federal unemployment benefits. It is also set to end the week of Sept. 4.

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In that work, the key federal benefit programs are set to end. Based on current estimates, that could leave 25 million people without a source of unemployment benefits and an additional 15 million without supplemental \$400-a-week in federal assistance, according to a study update from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.

The final number could likely rise to the high 20s, given that the state has 111,177 job openings posted on its online job database, and initial unemployment claims continue to rise.

That of course assumes the state's unemployment insurance system is not subject to business closures. Initial claims for regular unemployment benefits dropped to 5,511 for the week ending July 24, the lowest since the pandemic started. That compares with 104,217 claims at the peak in the week that ended April 11, 2020, and an average of 1,900 claims a week in 2019.

We've tried to see the number of weekly initial claims that have been filed forward in court, and nothing out of ordinary levels. The state's economic director of the CDE said in a letter to the Colorado's economy department that we're focused now on connecting Colorado to available work opportunities before the state's budget problems become a reality in the coming weeks.

About 50,000 Coloradoans collected regular state unemployment benefits during the week ending July 17, which remains about double the weekly rate averaged in 2019. That state program, however, will continue past the Sept. 6 deadline set for federal unemployment programs under the American Recovery Act.

They were 1.1% initial claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, a program that provides temporary cash compensation to self-employed workers who otherwise aren't eligible for state benefits. For the week ending July 17,

That compares with more than 40,000 claims in the peak week of April 12, 2020.

The new program introduced for the first time during the pandemic, and had 55,223 additional claims for the week ending July 17, meaning a significant number of people face a shortfall in support if they don't find an alternative source of income before then.

Eligible self-employed workers can still file an initial claim for up to 40 days beyond the deadline, but only against income lost during the full weeks prior to the deadline.

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, which assists the long-term unemployed who have exhausted their regular state benefits, is also set to end next. It supported 77,849 recipients the week ending July 17, and the number of claimants there has been on the rise the past three weeks.

A third program, Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, provides about 30,000 Coloradoans each with an additional \$400 a week in federal unemployment benefits. It is also set to end the week of Sept. 4.

This article was written by the Denver Post's business reporter, [Name obscured].

Congress fails to extend eviction moratorium

WASHINGTON

By Lisa Mascaro, Michael Casey and Josh Boak

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » A nationwide eviction moratorium is set to expire Saturday after President Joe Biden and Democrats in Congress worked furiously but ultimately failed to align on a long-shot strategy to prevent millions of Americans from being forced from their homes during a COVID19 surge.

More than 3.6 million Americans are at risk of eviction, some in a matter of days, as nearly \$47 billion in federal housing aid to the states during the pandemic has been slow to make it into the hands of renters and landlords owed payments.

Tensions mounted late Friday as it became clear there would be no resolution in sight. Hours before the ban was set to expire, Biden called on local governments to “take all possible steps” to immediately disburse the funds. Evictions could begin as soon as Monday.

“There can be no excuse for any state or locality not accelerating funds to landlords and tenants that have been hurt during this pandemic,” Biden said in a statement.

“Every state and local government must get these funds out to ensure we prevent every eviction we can,” he said.

The stunning outcome, as the White House and Congress each expected the other to act, exposed a rare divide between the president and his allies on Capitol Hill, one that could have lasting impact as the nation’s renters face widespread evictions.

Biden set off the scramble by announcing he would allow the eviction ban to expire, rather than challenge a recent Supreme Court ruling signaling this would be the last deadline. He called on Congress on Thursday to swiftly pass legislation to extend the date.

Racing to respond, Democrats strained to rally the votes early Friday. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi implored colleagues to pass legislation extending the deadline, calling it a “moral imperative,” to protect renters and the landlords who are owed compensation.

Congress must “meet the needs of the American people: both the families unable to make rent and those to whom the rent is to be paid,” she said in an overnight letter late Thursday.

But after hours of behind-the-scenes wrangling throughout the day, Democratic lawmakers had questions and could not muster support to extend the ban even a few months. An attempt simply to approve an extension by consent, without a formal vote, was objected to by House Republicans. The Senate may try again Saturday.

Lawmakers were livid at prospect of evictions in the middle of a surging pandemic.

“Housing is a primary social indicator of health, in and of itself, even absent COVID,” said Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y. “A mass eviction in the United States does represent a public health crisis unto itself.”

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., the Financial Services Committee leader who wrote the emergency bill, said House leaders should have held the vote, even if it failed, to show Americans they were trying to solve the problem.

"Is it emergency enough that you're going to stop families from being put on the street?" Waters testified at a hastily called hearing early Friday, urging her colleagues to act. "What the hell is going to happen to these children?"

But Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington, the top Republican on another panel handling the issue, said the Democrats' bill was rushed.

"This is not the way to legislate," she said.

The ban initially was put in place to prevent further spread of COVID-19 by people put out on the streets and into shelters.

Congress pushed nearly \$47 billion to the states earlier in the COVID-19 crisis to shore up landlords and renters as workplaces shut down and many people were suddenly out of work.

But lawmakers said state governments have been slow to distribute the money. On Friday, they said only some \$3 billion has been spent.

By the end of March, 6.4 million American households were behind on their rent, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. As of July 5, approximately 3.6 million people in the U.S. said they faced eviction in the next two months, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey.

Some places are likely to see spikes in evictions starting Monday, while other jurisdictions will see an increase in court filings that will lead to evictions over several months.

Biden said Thursday that the administration's hands are tied after the Supreme Court signaled the moratorium would be extended only until the end of the month.

At the White House, deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said the administration backs the congressional effort "to extend the eviction moratorium to protect these vulnerable renters and their families."

The White House has been clear that Biden would have liked to extend the federal eviction moratorium because of the spread of the highly contagious delta variant of the coronavirus. But there are also concerns that challenging the court could lead to a ruling restricting the administration's ability to respond to future public health crises.

The administration is trying to keep renters in place through other means. It released more than \$1.5 billion in rental assistance in June, which helped nearly 300,000 households. Biden on Thursday asked the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture and Veterans Affairs to extend their eviction moratoriums on households living in federally insured, single-family homes. In a statement late Friday the agencies announced an extension of the foreclosure-related ban through the end of September.

On a 5-4 vote last month, the Supreme Court allowed the broad eviction ban to continue through the end of July. One of those in the majority, Justice Brett Kavanaugh, made clear he would block any additional extensions unless there was "clear and specific congressional authorization."

Aides to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, the chief of the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, said the two were working on legislation to extend the moratorium and were asking Republicans not to block it.

"The public health necessity of extended protections for renters is obvious," said Diane Yentel, executive director of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. "If federal court cases made a broad extension impossible, the Biden administration should implement all possible alternatives, including a more limited moratorium on federally backed properties."