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OPINION PAGE

Good move!

It's a small step, but it's a great start.

Last night, aldermen approved raising fines for landlords who violate ordinances pertaining to trash, fire codes and other issues.

Sure, the fines are still low (from \$200 to \$500 depending on the frequency of the offense), but it's at least a positive acknowledgment of the job the being done by NeighborWorks Greater Manchester. The neighborhood activist group made the recommendation as part of its work to find ways to crack down on bad landlords.

Only Ward 5's Ed Osborne voted against the measure, saying the increases could

only be effective with better enforcement.

Renters are citizens too, and they need to feel that their city gives a damn when an absentee landlord makes their quality of life unpleasant.

This is a step toward giving tenants some much need piece of mind. It's also a message to negligent landlords that Manchester is not a city that will stand by and allow offenses to happen without penalties.

Aldermen are also looking into ways to take control of a property of ordinance fines go unpaid.

Now that would be an ordinance with some teeth.