

Ariana Costa

From: bounce@bounce.votervoice.net on behalf of Shane Cooper <user@votervoice.net>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 10:48 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: OPPOSE RENT CONTROL H8108

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

I am writing to express opposition to House Bill 8108.

This legislation should be understood as a policy detrimental to the state economy, not a landlord-tenant disagreement. Policies that regulate housing prices alter incentives across the entire housing market — influencing investment, maintenance, lending, insurance underwriting, and ultimately whether additional housing is created in Rhode Island. Analysis from the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council (RIPEC) consistently emphasizes two realities about our state's housing and municipal finance structure: Rhode Island faces a structural housing shortage, and municipalities rely heavily on stable property values to fund core public services. Policies that discourage reinvestment or reduce property values directly undermine both of these conditions at the same time.

By limiting the financial viability of rental housing, this proposal risks reducing reinvestment in existing units and slowing new development. RIPEC's research has highlighted that increasing supply is essential to improving affordability. Measures that restrict returns on housing do the opposite — they discourage production and delay rehabilitation, worsening long-term affordability rather than improving it.

The bill would also require an extensive regulatory framework to administer compliance, hearings, and enforcement. This type of permanent oversight structure carries substantial cost while producing no new housing units. Rhode Island's limited public resources would be more effectively directed toward targeted assistance programs and policies that expand supply — approaches that research repeatedly shows are more effective at helping households facing affordability challenges.

Additionally, if regulated property values stagnate while municipal obligations remain constant, tax burdens inevitably shift. Because municipalities must still fund schools, infrastructure, and safety services, pressure moves toward the most stable tax base: single-family homeowners.

Rhode Island's housing challenge is real, but long-term affordability depends on increasing availability and encouraging reinvestment — not discouraging it. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose H8108 and instead focus on policies that expand housing opportunity and directly assist residents in need.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Shane Cooper
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