Ariana Costa

From: bounce@bounce.votervoice.net on behalf of Stephen Chenard <user@votervoice.net>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 10:05 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: OPPOSE - Please vote NO H8108 & S2271

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Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

I rent to my elderly in laws at a very reduced monthly rate. When they move out or on I should be allowed to increase to the market prevailing rate without red tape and delay. Second, taking away a landlord's ince ntive to buy, renovate and rent at the market rate seems business unfriendly and counter to the American economic values. #rd, renovations to rent are what supports many small business carpenters, plumbers and electricians who rais ethe propety values while putting people to work. taking away this investment incentive is wrong on so many levels.

I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to H8108 & S2271

This legislation should be viewed as a statewide economic policy rather than a landlord-tenant dispute. Regulating housing prices changes incentives across the entire market — affecting investment decisions, property maintenance, financing, and ultimately the availability of housing for Rhode Island residents.

Evidence from other jurisdictions consistently shows that rent control reduces housing supply and reinvestment. A national survey by the National Apartment Association found that **71% of housing providers expect to reduce or halt investment in regulated markets**, while more than **60% report deferring non-essential maintenance and improvements**. The National Association of Home Builders similarly reports that **nearly 90% of builders avoid constructing housing in rent-controlled jurisdictions**.

This is particularly concerning in Rhode Island, where **over 80% of the housing stock is older** and depends on continual reinvestment to remain safe and habitable. Limiting rental income makes it more difficult to finance repairs, modernization, and energy improvements, which ultimately harms the quality of housing available to tenants.

Historical outcomes reinforce this pattern. In the 1980s, after rent control was imposed, the number of rental units declined by **8% in Cambridge and 12% in Brookline, Massachusetts**. After Cambridge repealed rent control in 1994, permits for new construction and renovation more than doubled for the following decade — demonstrating how regulation had suppressed housing activity.

Rent regulation also affects public finances. Reduced property values translate into reduced tax revenue for essential services. Because municipalities rely heavily on property taxation, that burden does not disappear — it shifts, often onto single-family homeowners. In Portland, Maine, analysts estimated **$6.3 to $10.6 million annually** in redistributed tax burden onto other property owners following similar policies. Many of Rhode Island's cities have a larger share of multifamily property in comparison to Portland, ME - meaning that shift would be even larger.

Finally, rent control often fails to reach those most in need. After repeal in Cambridge, a study of over 12,000 units showed only **10% of rent-controlled units were occupied by low-income households**, illustrating how broad price controls can misallocate benefits while making housing harder to find for future renters.

Rhode Island faces a real affordability challenge, but long-term solutions require expanding housing availability and supporting targeted assistance for households in need — not discouraging housing creation and reinvestment.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose this porposal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

stephen chenard
100 Marine Dr
Narragansett, RI 02882
stevechenard21@gmail.com