



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

April 11, 2023

The Honorable Steve Casey
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island
02903

Dear Chairman Casey and honorable members of the Committee:

I write this letter in strong opposition to House Bill 7891 entitled AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY - RENT CONTROL IN THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE. This act, if passed, would allow the City of Providence to adopt rent control ordinances subject to certain exemptions.

Providence, like the State of Rhode Island, is facing a housing crisis. As Mayor, I fully recognize and understand the issue that rising rents is causing the City of Providence, and I am committed to finding meaningful solutions to this issue.

Currently, 37 states prohibit municipalities from imposing rent control at the city or town level. Rent control reduces the quantity and quality of available housing by discouraging investment in rental properties and leads to deferred maintenance and deterioration of rental units over time. Furthermore, rent control harms tenants by reducing their access to safe housing while distorting the housing market.

The root cause of the City of Providence's rising rents stems from the lack of supply, rent control will do nothing to aid in the creation of housing, rather it will disincentivize it. As Mayor, I am committed to building more affordable and middle-income housing, which is the only real solution to the rental affordability crisis we are facing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brett P. Smiley", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brett P. Smiley

Mayor