



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 Members of the Committee:

I write this letter in strong opposition to House Bill 7989 entitled- AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- GENERAL POWERS--TENANT PROTECTION ACT. If passed it would authorize cities and towns to establish a housing authority to adopt tenant protection measures, including rent control, annual rent increase ordinances and no-fault evictions, 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,


Brett P. Smiley

Mayor