

Dear Committee clerk Huntley,

Dear Rep. Messier and members of the House Municipal Government & Housing Committee,

I OPPOSE H7989.

This bill proposes several things, each of which will further exacerbate the shortage of housing in Rhode Island, and will increase costs of housing for all residents.

Rent control is widely known to be a disaster for housing. There are few winners when a city or state implements rent control, and many losers. Rent control is a regressive policy, and you should not consider it. I know that some people believe that it helps renters, and it does help a few of them, but in aggregate, it results in fewer rental units being available, which results in renters not being able to find housing, and not being able to change their housing situation. Developers are not able to build new (since banks will not lend on rent controlled projects). Landlords will not maintain properties, since there is no incentive to do so.

Oddly enough, this means that there are fewer jobs for tenants - when you destroy the construction industry, you limit the ability for all industries to hire and pay decent wages.

Just cause evictions are also a horrible idea. Landlords will not be able to offer apartments to as many tenants, since renting to a tenant could end up being a lifetime commitment. Although a tenant might start out well in a unit, they may have issues later that create a situation that means they should leave the apartment, such as a new-found drug addiction that results in the tenant creating an unsafe living environment for other tenants in the building.

Regulation of condo and cooperative conversions - this is simply unamerican. Please do not require additional restrictions on residential property.

Regulation of security deposits. A tenant can create damages that eclipse the single months security deposit tens of times over within a single month. Allowing a tenant to pay over many months is a non-starter. You will create even more load on our court system and a restriction in housing availability.

Municipal Anti-Displacement Zones:

Cities or towns can establish anti-displacement zones to protect low- and moderate-income households from displacement.

I guess you want to create ghettos? I think the best thing would be to help people learn how to get out of poverty, not corral them into one district or zone. What kind of redlining are you trying to do?

Reporting Requirements:

Cities and towns adopting these provisions must provide annual reports to the department of housing.

Sounds like an unfunded mandate that will further burden cities and towns, and to what end? I'm not sure, but it sounds like unnecessary use of tax dollars.

Deceptive Trade Practices and Remedies:

Violations of these provisions are deemed unfair and deceptive trade practices, and grants power to the AG to pursue civil penalties, injunctive relief, and any other relief available.

When you increase uncertainty for housing providers, you reduce the availability of housing, and increase the costs.

I think your intent with this bill is admirable, but please work to increase the availability of housing and reduce costs to housing providers if you want to solve this crisis. Housing providers have decades of experience in providing housing and are a wealth of ideas, you should reach out and learn what it actually takes to get this problem solved.

Sincerely,

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