

Ariana Costa

From: Anthony Thompson <user@votervoice.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 4:41 PM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Subject: H5954 - Oppose

Dear Committee clerk Huntley,

This bill, among other provisions, seeks to authorize rent control, require just cause evictions, and mandate landlord-tenant relations in cases of housing violations. While the bill is well-intentioned, I believe these proposed measures would have detrimental effects on both landlords and tenants, potentially leading to unintended consequences for our community.

On rent control (which "stabilization" is just another form of), I believe rent control is a well-intentioned but fundamentally misguided effort to address the increase in rents that has resulted from a supply-demand imbalance in our State, the fruit of a history of exclusionary zoning practices.

Like other forms of government price controls, economists nearly universally agree that rent control tends to have the exact opposite of its intended effect.

It disincentivizes creation of new rental units, which is the only long-term solution to address the supply-demand imbalance, and discourages owners from functionally improving our aging housing stock by limiting the benefit they can realize from upgrading housing units. Fewer units will be built and existing units will deteriorate because developers and owners will be prevented from being compensated for investing in new and better units.

On "just cause" evictions, I believe "just cause eviction" is a fundamental violation of a property owner's freedom to choose to whom and when they rent their property.

Residential leasing has always been based on agreement between housing providers and tenants that is mutually beneficial and allows either party, with sufficient notice, to end the agreement and go their separate ways.

This legislation would fundamentally change that relationship in favor of tenants, forcing housing providers to continue rental agreements even if they do not want to, for example to renovate and improve a rental unit, or to satisfy a buyer who requests a vacant unit to move into, and on that basis I strongly oppose it.

It also makes it nearly impossible for a housing provider to remove a tenant who causes problems or is disruptive to other tenants in a building, because the only way to do so would be if some of the other tenants are willing to testify against the problem tenant... which realistically will never happen because good tenants will fear for their own safety and the safety of their property and will simply move out and leave the problem tenant in the building to repeat the behavior with the next unlucky occupant.

Tenants often look to housing providers to maintain a peaceful and harmonious living environment by resolving disputes between them and, if necessary, removing a bad tenant who is clearly causing problems for other, good tenants. But this bill would completely eliminate a housing provider's ability to do that, to the detriment of good tenants who just want to live in peace.

On mandated landlord-tenant relations for housing violations, mandating landlord-tenant relations in cases of housing violations could burden landlords with additional bureaucratic requirements and legal liabilities, discouraging property ownership and investment in rental housing.

Finally, I urge legislators to consider alternative approaches that promote housing affordability and tenant protections without stifling housing market dynamics or infringing on property rights. Solutions such as increasing housing supply through streamlined permitting processes, providing financial incentives for affordable housing development, and enhancing tenant education and support services are strongly preferred to the heavy-handed and one-sided proposals in this bill.

The only solution to the shortage of affordable housing is creating more supply so that competition increases and prices stop increasing. Since we know that just cause eviction & rent control policies deter building, it does not make sense to enact these policies.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to our state.

Sincerely,

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