

Dear Representative Stephen Casey,

I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to House Bill H5954, which would authorize rent control and just cause eviction ordinances in Providence. While I understand the genuine concerns about housing affordability in Providence and Rhode Island, rent control policies have consistently produced significant negative economic consequences that will ultimately harm both tenants and the broader housing market throughout Rhode Island.

Extensive economic research demonstrates that rent control distorts housing markets in several critical ways:

1. **Reduces Housing Investment:** rent control significantly diminishes investor confidence in residential real estate, reducing capital flow into housing development and renovation when it is needed most.
2. **Causes Housing Shortages:** It creates housing shortages by discouraging new development and reducing overall rental inventory as property owners convert housing units to other uses.
3. **Deteriorates housing quality:** It leads to deteriorating housing quality as rent caps reduce landlords' ability and incentive to maintain and improve properties.
4. **Creates allocative inefficiencies:** It produces allocative inefficiencies by distributing housing based on tenure rather than need, significantly limiting mobility for workers, families, and vulnerable populations.

These are not merely theoretical concerns. Cities with long-standing rent control policies, such as San Francisco and New York, continue to face some of the nation's most severe housing crises despite—or perhaps because of—these interventions.

Instead of implementing artificial price controls, I strongly urge the legislature to pursue policies that directly address the housing supply shortage:

1. Streamline zoning and permitting processes to reduce development costs
2. Create targeted incentives for affordable housing construction
3. Reform building codes and regulatory requirements that unnecessarily increase housing costs
4. Expand rental assistance programs for the most vulnerable residents

Rhode Island deserves housing policies based on evidence rather than well-intentioned but counterproductive market interventions. I respectfully request that you oppose House Bill H5954 and instead support comprehensive housing solutions that will truly benefit all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Edinaldo Tebaldi, Ph.D.

Professor of Economics

Vice President for Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness

etebaldi@bryant.edu

401-232-6901

Bryant University