



*Including testimony from 30 housing providers.*

Better Communities. Better Policy. Better Lives.

Our legal purpose is to create better rental housing.

# Testimony opposed to S.1447. Hearing July 29, 2025

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RE: Rent Control or Rent Stabilization:

S.1447 An Act enabling cities and towns to stabilize rents and protect tenants

## Prepared for

The Joint Committee on Regions and Municipalities, Massachusetts General Court, State House, Boston  
July 29, 2025

## Prepared by

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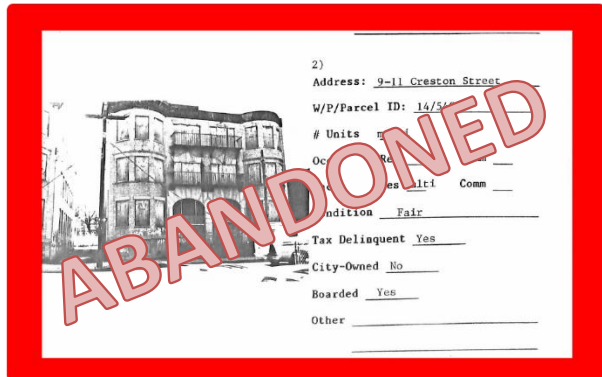
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## Funded by

The 2,500 members of MassLandlords, Inc.

a 501(c)6 nonprofit trade association whose mission is  
to create better rental housing in Massachusetts.

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## Executive Summary

On the basis of communication with members, member polling and MassLandlords staff assessment, MassLandlords, Inc. strongly opposes rent control in all its forms, however called (rent stabilization, just cause eviction, etc.). Rent control has only one benefit: it helps constituents who are already renting an apartment when the bill passes into law. It hurts everyone else immediately and forever after. We know this with very high confidence because rent control has been tried in Massachusetts. It was repealed for its failures by statewide ballot initiative in 1994, creating a natural experiment for scientific study. We know with very high confidence that rent control lowered assessed values for nearby non-controlled properties by billions of dollars. This reduced local tax revenue, resulting in public money being siphoned from other towns into rent-controlled towns via the State Aid formula. Rent control also had a serious unintended consequence for renters needing to move, namely, availability discrimination, ensuring that rent controlled apartments went disproportionately to wealthy or white renters. Rent control is already allowed under Chapter 40P. For rent control to be enacted, either towns must come up with substantial additional budget under 40P or a new rent control regime must be enacted to prevent both maintenance and normal turnover. Rent control had a disastrous social impact on housing providers, infamously leading to the death of landlord Peter Petrillo and the ruined lives of dozens of others, a few of which are documented in this testimony. Only a profoundly uneducated person – or a populist pandering for votes – would propose a return to rent control given all we have learned in the intervening years about housing production and rental assistance.

## Membership Polling

MassLandlords, Inc. is a nonprofit that was launched in 2014. Since then, we have grown to serve over 2,500 dues-paying businesses headquartered in more than 300 municipalities across the commonwealth, with site traffic of over 200,000 unique individuals yearly. **Our mission is to create better rental housing** by helping owners rent their property and by advocating for better laws. Each week we deliver networking and training events over Zoom. Each month we deliver in-person events and a 20-page, full color newsletter. Available 24/7 are a host of cost-saving and educational services. In 2019, we launched the Certified Massachusetts Landlord Level One™, the first of three levels of our new professional certification for individual owners and managers. **Our average member owns 29 units. Half of our members own fewer than 6 units. In total, we have direct connections to over 60,000 renter households.**

Each member is asked regularly to participate in our ongoing survey on “public policy priorities.” We use this data, in combination with our economic analysis, to study aspects of housing policy and to make recommendations for reform. Our policy priority survey uses “score voting,” where each participant scores each policy area. A “0” means “strongly opposed to this idea.” A “100” means “strongly in support of this idea.” “50” is a point of indifference.

Our members consistently vote “oppose rent control” as a top policy priority. Two-thirds of members rate “oppose rent control” a 90 in importance or higher. 85% of members rate “oppose rent control” a



75 or higher. Members are strongly in support of deploying organization resources to oppose rent control.

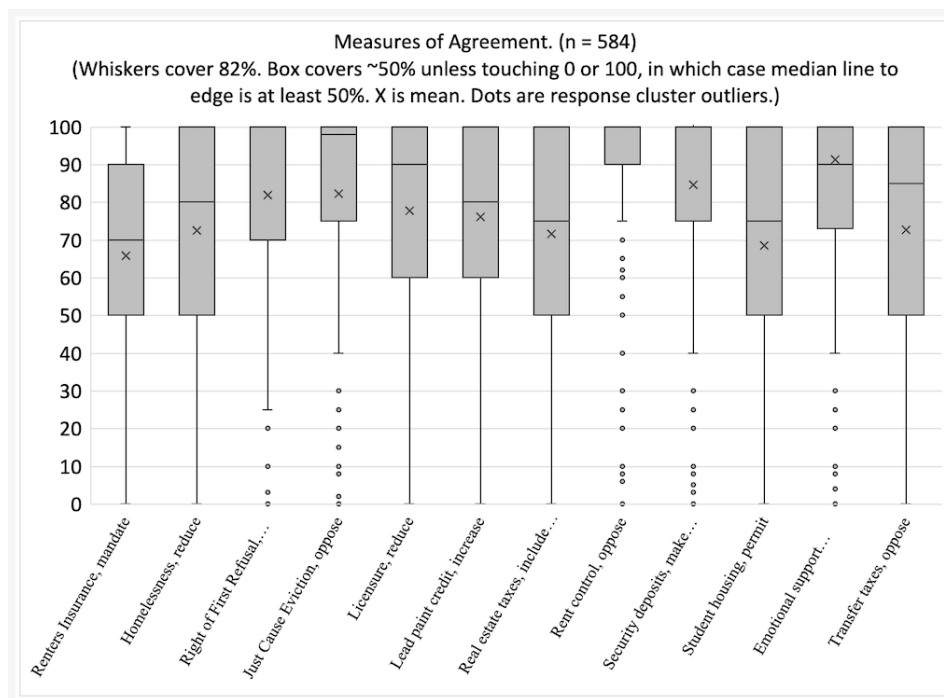


Figure 1. The high, small solid bar for "Rent control, oppose"(5<sup>th</sup> from right) shows that 50% of members rate this issue a 90 or higher in importance, and 82% rate it over 75. Rent control is highly partisan and anti-housing.

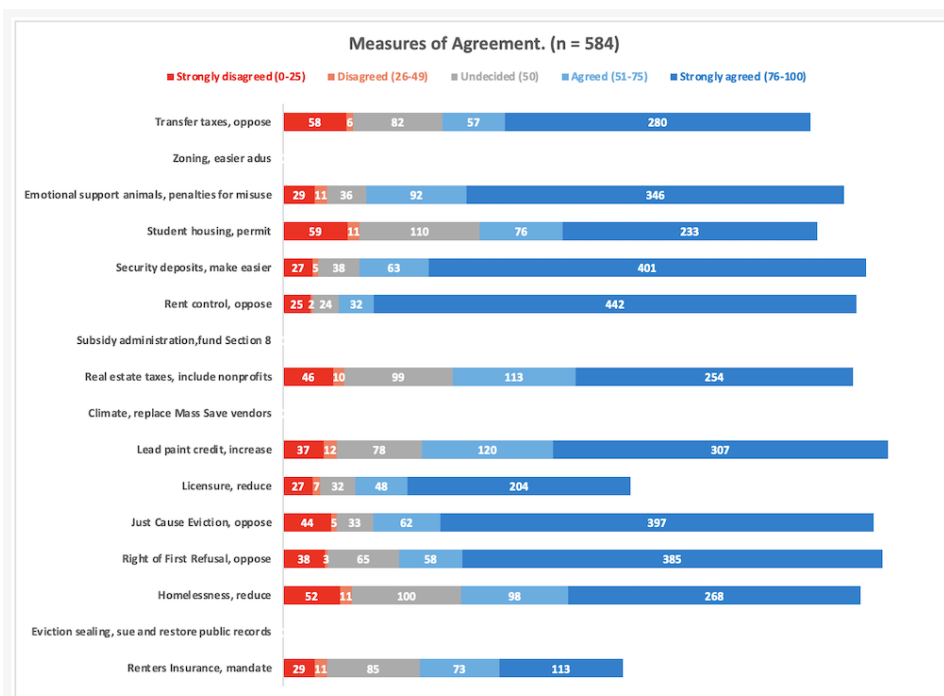


Figure 2. An alternative view of the same data in the above graph. "Rent control, oppose" is here 6<sup>th</sup> from the top. (Empty bars are newly posted survey questions with small response count to date.)

## **Flaw One: Local Option Rent Control Would Redistribute at least 1.3% of State Budget (\$600 million) from Non-rent control Towns to Rent Control Towns**

Massachusetts municipalities are funded to varying degrees by real estate taxes, revenue from which was lower under rent control. Rent control reduced assessed values, and with lower assessed values came lower real estate tax revenue. Our commonwealth uses a "State Aid" formula (sometimes called "Cherry Sheets") for redistributing resources among towns to ensure that each community has a budget for schools and municipal operations. If a town or city becomes weaker through loss of local real estate tax revenue, then the State Aid formula automatically redistributes revenue from stronger towns to the weaker town.

For example, consider the City of Boston, which is usually very strong. Boston's Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) budget showed \$3 billion of revenue from net property tax (73% of budget). In most years, forecasts show net property tax increasing in real terms and as a percentage of municipal revenue<sup>1</sup>. This is consistent with the broader trend since 2002, when net property tax was only 52% of revenue. Property tax from all sources – residential, commercial and industrial – has usually been the driver of Boston's municipal operation and will be for the foreseeable future, absent rent control. (As discussed below, rent control on residential property has a spillover cost to nearby commercial and industrial property.)

Because of its normally strong real estate tax revenues, Boston needs and therefore receives relatively little State Aid. Boston State Aid for FY24 was only 3% of city revenue. Net State Aid to Boston has been decreasing over the last twenty years as real estate has grown in value.

This is true of other wealthy towns. For example, consider Weston, where 90% of the town's \$93 million budget comes from property taxes. Only 5% of Weston's FY24 budget was state aid. Weston is not known for rental housing. Cambridge is, but Cambridge is likewise wealthy: only 6% of revenue is State Aid. Somerville is likewise wealthy and full of rentals: only 6% of revenue is State Aid.

The same is not true of gateway cities. In fact, most of the communities with a lot of rental housing rely on State Aid. Springfield and Lowell each will receive 62% of FY24 municipal budget from State Aid. Worcester will receive 47% of FY24 budget in the form of State Aid.

**Rent control is known to have reduced assessed values by approximately 20% of municipal levy.** David Autor studied Cambridge before and after rent control was repealed in 1994<sup>2</sup>. The analysis is quite complex, but there are two main takeaways:

- Rent control had what economics call *negative externality*, meaning buildings that were rent-controlled lost assessed values, but so did buildings nearby. This so-called "spillover" effect

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<sup>1</sup> <https://content.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2023/09/FY24%20Full%20Budget%20Document.pdf> figure 71 Multi-Year Revenue Forecast, page 58.

<sup>2</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.

meant entire regions of Cambridge had reduced assessed value just because they were close to run-down rent-controlled properties.

- The total losses in assessed value in Cambridge were \$1.8 billion in 2008 dollars, out of a total of \$10.0 billion of assessed value (15% of possible levy).

If we apply the same de-rate to levies in Boston, Cambridge and Somerville, we can see municipal revenue for those three towns will fall a combined \$577 million. The FY24 State budget was \$56 billion (we'll continue to refer to FY24 because that's when we first did the analysis). This represents roughly 1% of even FY26 state budget being redistributed from towns without rent control to Boston, Cambridge and Somerville, expected to swiftly enact rent control.

Municipality	Total Budget FY24 (\$)	Property Taxes as a Percentage of Total Budget	Cost to State Aid of Rent Control in 2023 dollars (\$)
<b>Boston</b>	4,239,900,000	73%	469,200,000
<b>Cambridge</b>	881,757,000	54%	71,482,414
<b>Somerville</b>	337,300,000	72%	36,357,567
			<b>577,039,981</b>

If additional towns enact rent control, the cost to State Aid will increase further. Remember also that rent control requires a bureaucracy, so municipal budgets enacting rent control will be further strained by increased expenses.



*Figure 3. On Feb 22, 2023 Sheila Dillon, Chief, Office of Housing Stability, City of Boston said, speaking about rent control bills, ""We know that Cambridge and Somerville are very very interested in having some form of rent stabilization. I think -- I know they are watching what happens here very closely. If the legislature approve [our bill], I would betcha that they would file something very very quickly." Opening the door to one town opens it to all towns and starts a race to the bottom.*

Allowing a town or city to enact rent control would be giving it unilateral power to increase its own State Aid. This would trigger a race to the bottom. We would make this a major point of contention in any attempt to enact local control. This State Aid formula is why rent control was repealed by statewide ballot in 1994, despite local support for rent control in Boston, Brookline and Cambridge. The other towns did not want to pay into this failed system. Landlords were effective at communicating this problem then and will be again.

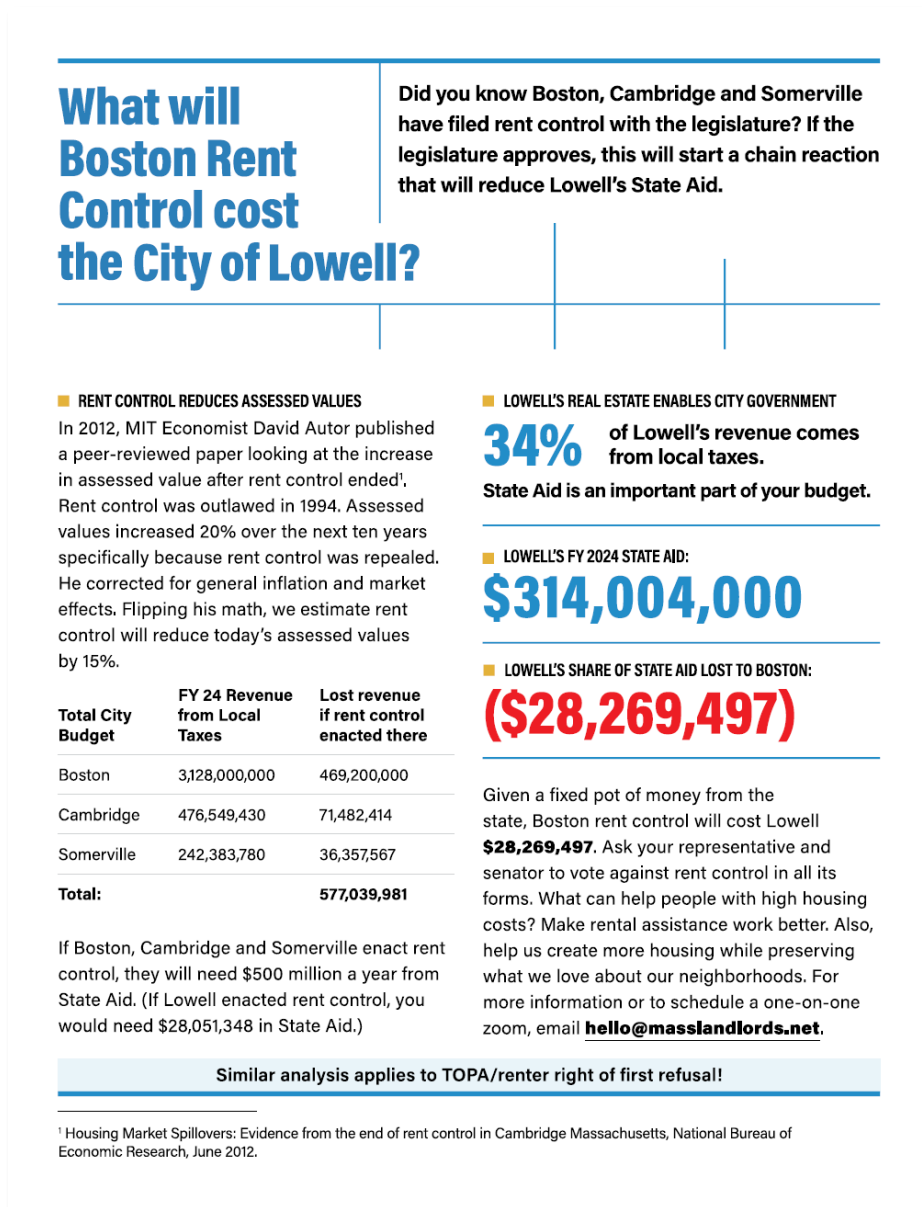


Figure 4. MassLandlords has developed flyers for a variety of Massachusetts towns and cities showing the loss of State Aid to rent control towns. Flyers were mailed to select communities, city councils and legislators spring 2024 and are already being prepared for a wider audience across more channels. See appendix for additional 2024 actuals.

## **Flaw Two: Rent Control creates Unlawful Disparate Impact on the Basis of Race.**

Massachusetts had rent control in some communities for roughly 25 years. Housing providers hated it for many reasons and worked to repeal it. We then did repeal rent control (some would say unexpectedly) in 1994. Economists have since studied Massachusetts as a “natural experiment” on whether rent control is good or bad. We now know what landlords in 1994 could not have known: Rent control is bad for its racist disparate impact.

Proponents of rent control argue that rent control will prevent renters, especially renters of color, from being displaced. This is true, in the sense that rent control helps anyone who has an apartment the day the law is passed. There are studies and research on this. The anti-displacement picture is clear. But that is not the whole picture.

The problem becomes visible when we consider applicants for new housing over decades of a rent control regime. We know from researching Massachusetts’ own history that rent control hurt applicants of color far in excess of any transient stabilization benefit.

In 2007, David Sims, Economics Department at Brigham Young University, published “Out of control: What can we learn from the end of Massachusetts rent control?”, J. Urban. Econ. 61 (2007) 129-151. Among many other findings, this one stands out:

***Only 12% of renters of color occupied rent-controlled units, even though 24% of the residents in those cities were residents of color.*** There was a clear adverse disparate impact against renters of color during rent control.

The adverse disparate impact was caused by rent control. The Economist magazine further studied the situation. In the article *Rent Control: The Morning After*<sup>3</sup>, the Economist showed that ***when rent control was repealed, the number of people of color in formerly controlled housing doubled*** to be equal to what you'd expect based on the city population.

### ***What was going on?***

Normally, landlords can increase rent to offset perception of risk, including credit, income and criminal history for marginal applicants. Under rent control, especially with just cause eviction, landlords hold units vacant longer waiting for applicants with high credit, high income, and no history of minor criminal record. Such applicants will tend to be disproportionately and unfairly not people of color. There is a Black–white wealth gap, and much more systemic racism, that disadvantages people of color on rental applications. There doesn’t need to be any personal racism at all for systemic racism to appear.

The Economic Policy Institute shows the 2018 median household income was \$41,692 for Black households<sup>4</sup> and \$70,642 for white households. ApartmentList shows Black households are twice as

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.economist.com/node/161526>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.epi.org/blog/racial-and-ethnic-income-gaps-persist-amid-uneven-growth-in-household-incomes/>

likely to be evicted<sup>5</sup> as white households. The Urban Institute shows 21 percent of Black households have a FICO credit score above 700<sup>6</sup>, whereas 50 percent of white households do. And a report from the Sentencing Project shows African Americans constitute 53 percent of drug convictions<sup>7</sup>, despite representing 14 percent of drug users.

**Despite personal discrimination protections, rent control and just cause eviction together drove landlords toward tougher screening metrics.** And the numbers in America and in Massachusetts no less differ unfairly by race.

This work builds on extensive research in this field, including Heikki Loikkanen's "On Availability Discrimination under Rent Control," *Scan. J. Econ., Sep., 1985, Vol. 87, No. 3, pp. 500–520*. Loikkanen gives us the ability to predict exactly how much systemic racism will result from rent control. The answer is bad for all rent control proposals, mitigated only to the extent rent control is curbed or restricted. We might as well not have it.

With the data available publicly, any rent control system would be immediately challengeable under Title VIII of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1968 (the Fair Housing Act). To allow only a little rent control in just one town hurts everyone in all towns, in exactly the same way exclusionary zoning has hurt us: It reduces supply there, drives people out of town and makes housing more expensive everywhere else.

As the reverend Dr. Martin Luther King wrote from jail, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." There must be a better system, which is why we regulate markets. But just because some regulation may be good and effective (e.g., laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race), it does not make all regulation good (e.g., rent control exacerbates racial inequity because wealth inequality is correlated with race). We must work diligently to eliminate systemic racism in Massachusetts and to correct the housing market by statewide – not local – action. It is extraordinarily difficult to craft housing policy without unintended consequences. It cannot be done locally.



Figure 5. "Meet the judge, the prince and the mayor who got rent controlled apartments." Social media advertisements for RentControlHistory.com were seen 600,000 times in 2024.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.apartmentlist.com/research/rental-insecurity-the-threat-of-evictions-to-americas-renters>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/breaking-down-black-white-homeownership-gap>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Reducing-Racial-Disparity-in-the-Criminal-Justice-System-A-Manual-for-Practitioners-and-Policymakers.pdf>



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Rent control is not “another tool in our toolbox.”  
Rent control is a Band-Aid applied to the dirty  
wound, a sledgehammer to the leaking faucet, a  
flamethrower to the unmowed lawn that is our  
housing crisis. Housing providers and experience  
are strongly opposed to rent control.

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### **Flaw Three: G.L. Chapter 40P Already Allows Rent Control**

General Laws Chapter 40P Section 4 allows any town or city to have rent control under a few conditions. These are conditions landlords can live with because we wrote this law, which was enacted in 1994 when rent control was "repealed." It wasn't really repealed; it was ordered paid for by the towns.

The first condition is that a municipality must reimburse owners for the difference between market rents and controlled rents. This is sensible. In all the talk about rent control, no one has ever mentioned real estate tax control, insurance premium control, plumbing bill control, or any other measure that would balance the equation for operators of real estate. Housing is expensive, especially with tariffs and as we attempt to meet the near-impossible demands of a changing climate. If a municipality wants to limit what a renter pays in rent, the municipality must make up the difference to the owner. Although easy in principle, in practice this would mean a town would have to come up with funding for the program. We can't change economics. Someone has to pay for housing.

The second condition under 40P is that rent control cannot be applied in certain circumstances. It says, “nor may such regulation apply to any rental unit that is owned by a person or entity owning less than ten rental units or that has a fair market rent exceeding \$400.” \$400 per what? This is our mistake. The landlords of that era probably meant to write “\$400 per month.” But they didn't. And you know what? We don't mind if towns interpret this limit liberally. “Per day” would grant broad discretion to regulate rents. And this would be fine with us.

The whole point of Chapter 40P is that it turned rent control into a form of rental assistance. This is similar to the form of rent control in the United States Housing Choice Voucher Program, sometimes known as Section 8. We are all in favor of helping renters. We just need to make sure we can still afford to provide housing. These rent control bills do the opposite: they delete a workable, already allowed form of rent control.

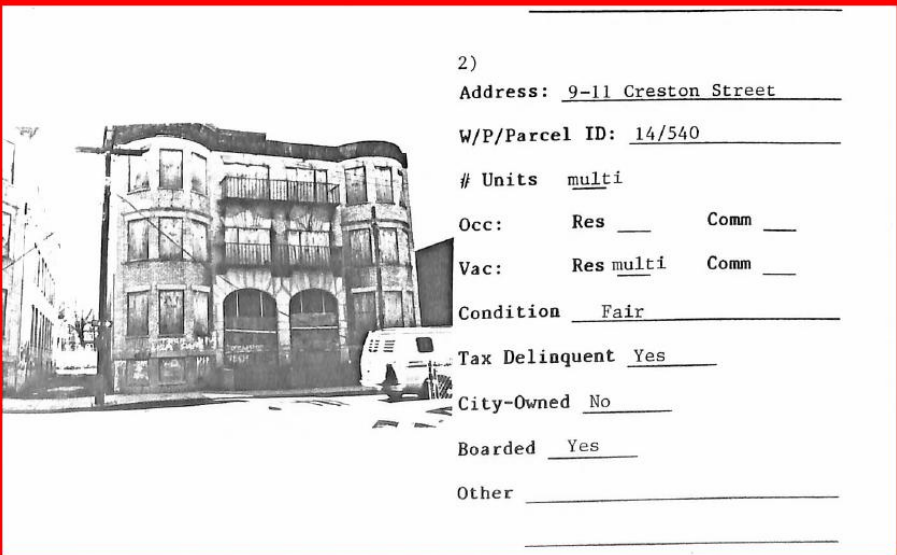


## Flaw Four: Rent Control is not about Rents, It's about Maintenance

Housing requires constant upkeep. The costs for materials and labor increase with inflation. In some years, inflation is very high. This is why rent control proposals seek to hold rent below the consumer price index. The result is that properties become undercapitalized and eventually unsafe. This effect is well studied. Developers swooped in to buy the distressed assets and waited for rent control to be repealed. Or in the case of the Boston bill last session, developers wrote in exemptions for themselves.

Note that anywhere the consumer price index (CPI) is mentioned, that is a distraction price. It's always "CPI or 5%, whichever is lower." That means over time it is impossible to keep pace with inflation. If any rent board were ever formed, it would by design stop rent increases just as history shows ("the landlord is earning too much," "wages have not risen as much," or other non-economic arguments).


In 1985, Boston Mayor Ray Flynn ordered a survey of boarded up properties because the problem had become so severe. Hundreds of properties containing thousands of units are known to have been boarded up. Here is just a sample of the records we have collected:



2)  
Address: 9-11 Creston Street  
W/P/Parcel ID: 14/540  
# Units multi  
Occ: Res      Comm       
Vac: Res multi Comm       
Condition Fair  
Tax Delinquent Yes  
City-Owned No  
Boarded Yes  
Other                     

*Figure 6. Boarded up, dilapidated buildings are just one of the negative consequences of rent control. If landlords can't recoup their costs, they will allow properties to fall into disrepair, eventually abandoning them. This image comes from North Dorchester, and there are hundreds more like it. (License: public domain - city of Boston report for mayor Raymond Flynn 1985)*





24)

Address: 200 Blue Hill Avenue

W/P/Parcel ID: 13/423

# Units 6

Occ:     Res          Comm     

Vac:     Res 6     Comm     

Condition fair


Tax Delinquent yes

City Owned no

Boarded yes

Other

Figure 7. 200 Blue Hill Ave., Roxbury (License: public domain - city of Boston report for mayor Raymond Flynn 1985)



2)

Address: 42-48 Savin Street

W/P/Parcel ID: 12/1005

# Units 6

Occ:     Res          Comm     

Vac:     Res 6     Comm     

Condition poor

Tax Delinquent yes

City-Owned no

Boarded no

Other

Figure 8. 42-48 Savin St., Roxbury (License: public domain - city of Boston report for mayor Raymond Flynn 1985)

23)

MAP # 16N10E

Address: 547 Blue Hill Avenue

W/P/Parcel ID: 12/2410

# Units 6

Occ: Res Comm

Vac: Res 6 Comm

Condition Fair

Tax Delinquent No

City Owned No

Boarded Yes

Other

Figure 9. 547 Blue Hill Ave., Roxbury (License: public domain - city of Boston report for mayor Raymond Flynn 1985)

4)

Address: 43 Holworthy Street

W/P/Parcel ID: 12/3299

# Units 4

Occ: Res Comm

Vac: Res 4 Comm

Condition Fair

Tax Delinquent Yes

City Owned No

Boarded Yes

Other

Figure 10. 43 Holworthy St., Roxbury (License: public domain - city of Boston report for mayor Raymond Flynn 1985)

The American Institute for Economic Research 2009 study shows the data on maintenance are very complex. Some newer properties don't fare so badly, but older properties are especially harmed. They found that pre-1947 buildings in Manhattan, for instance, were found to be 8.96% more likely to be structurally unsound than their equivalent uncontrolled counterparts. New buildings showed no difference. One study found that an average 3% benefit in rent was offset by an average 2% penalty in

reduced maintenance, meaning for every dollar rent control squeezed out of rents, two dollars came out of maintenance. (The remaining one dollar would come out of real estate taxes.)

In many cases, rent control was explicit in its intent to block maintenance. We have scanned over 7,000 pages of minutes from the rent control years. There are innumerable examples of landlords asking for permission to make repairs and being denied.

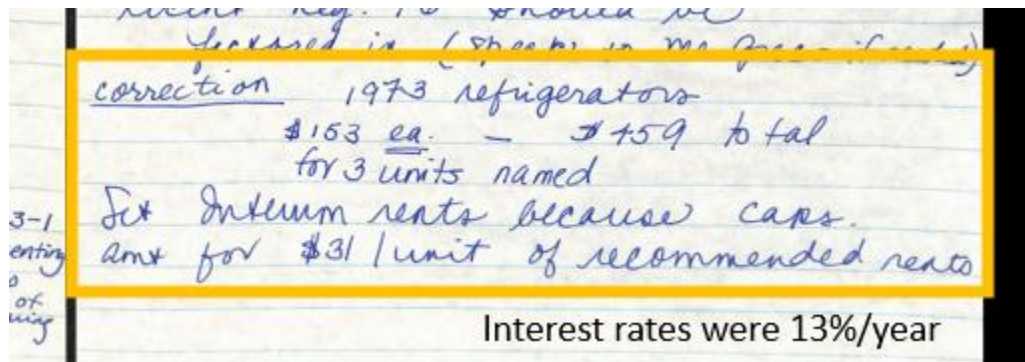


Figure 11. Minutes from the March 2, 1983 Cambridge rent board meeting show the owner of 38-44 Shepard St. was denied permission to replace ten year old refrigerators. This request was remanded for further hearing and delay by a vote of 4-0.

Who gains under a regime that blocks maintenance of old buildings? Developers. Developer buildings are exempt for five years under S.1447.

The role of developers in lobbying for rent control has been well documented by us in the context of Boston's bill last session. Twelve of the 25 appointees to Boston's rent stabilization advisory committee (RSAC) were developers (different bill, 193 H.3744, similar idea). Massachusetts has both for-profit and non-profit developers, so we should not automatically assume a nonprofit advocate of rent control is a renter advocate at heart. Developers have a particular interest not just in exempting themselves, but also in creating a particularly brutal rent control regime for landlords. Landlords being forced to sell distressed assets at bargain basement prices will create more opportunity for developers. The developers who participated in the RSAC (193 H.3744) were also all significant donors to Boston political races:

- Kimberly Sherman, president of Related Beal: personally donated \$500. Related Beal employees in aggregate had donated \$15,381.
- Chanda Smart, CEO at Onyx: donated \$1,700.
- Jeanne Pinado, vice president of capital markets at Colliers International: gave \$5,004. Colliers employees altogether donated \$88,330.12.
- Joe Kriesberg, president of Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, gave \$7,260.
- Curtis Kemeny, CEO and president of Boston Residential Group, gave \$13,835.50. BRG employees donated \$18,485.50.
- Dermot Doyne, local landlord and business owner, gave \$18,250.

- Emilio Dorcely, CEO of Urban Edge, donated nothing personally, but Urban Edge employees in aggregate donated \$19,494.46.
- Joe Byrne, Executive Secretary-Treasurer for the North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters, donated nothing personally, but the carpenters altogether donated \$1,425.
- Kirk Sykes, managing partner at Accordia Partners, gave \$40,513.
- Brian Kavoojian, managing director (or partner) of National Development, gave \$143,482.35. National Development employees altogether gave \$308,222.

Not one landlord organization was on the RSAC. There was an enormous amount of developer money advocating for rent control then and from others now.

Developers want rent control so they can buy the distressed assets of rent-controlled landlords, tear down those buildings, and subsequently build and operate the only rental units exempted from the rent control. This is exactly the opposite of the bill's stated title goal to protect tenants.




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The alignment on rent control between progressives and developers is a "Baptists and bootleggers" moment. During Prohibition in the 1920s, Baptists wanted temperance because they believed in it. And bootleggers wanted temperance because they could make money from it. Today, populist renter advocates with blind belief in rent control are being used by developers to make them money.

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## **Flaw Five: Just Cause Eviction Helps Bad Renters Harm Neighbors**

S.1447 has an explicit provision to restrict evictions. This is necessary to prevent landlords terminating tenancies just to raise the rent. We strongly oppose this. The so-called "just cause eviction" provisions attempt to enumerate all the possible reasons that a tenancy may be terminated, but do not include terminating a tenancy at will for "no cause state." "No cause stated eviction" is a legal term that has nothing to do with whether a renter is good or bad. Any time a landlord and a renter end up in court, one or both parties has done something very bad. This is why the legislature created and sustains the tenancy at will, which allows an owner to terminate for no cause stated (renter advocates have wrongly misdescribed this as "no fault"). This is also why the legislature has allowed renters innumerable counterclaims to defend against no-cause stated evictions.

## **Consider the Smoking Case of Gwendolyn Property Management v. Goodwin, Johnson**

In 2021, Gwendolyn Property Management took two of its tenants, Lisa Goodwin and Timothy Johnson, to court. The company was seeking possession of the unit after the tenants allegedly violated the lease by smoking on the premises.

Goodwin and Johnson, who had lived at the Webster property for 18 years, both admitted that they had smoked on the property in the past, but claimed they had switched to vaping. The lease they signed in 2019 included the MassLandlords no-smoking addendum, which has very careful definitions of what constitutes smoking. (“Smoking shall include the inhaling, exhaling, breathing, carrying, or possession of any lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, other product containing any amount of tobacco, marijuana, or other substance.”)

The property manager visited in July 2020 and smelled a strong cigarette odor coming from the third floor, where the defendants lived. Furthermore, Haley Ruggieri, a downstairs tenant, testified that she had smelled smoke and saw the defendants smoking starting in early 2020, noting that the smoke was cigarette smoke, not vapor from a vape pen. She also stated she saw cigarette butts around the defendants’ vehicles. Other witnesses also stated they had smelled a strong odor of cigarettes coming from the defendants’ apartment.

In April 2021, the tenants were served a notice to quit for violating the lease and smoking on the property. The property management company lost its case, because the judge apparently did not understand the difference between smoking cigarettes and vaping and did not believe the witnesses.

A no-fault case was filed after the for-cause case looked doomed. This case was won by the landlord. The property was rendered smoke free once again.

Just cause eviction restrictions allow all kinds of bad behaviors, including smoking, to continue uncorrected.

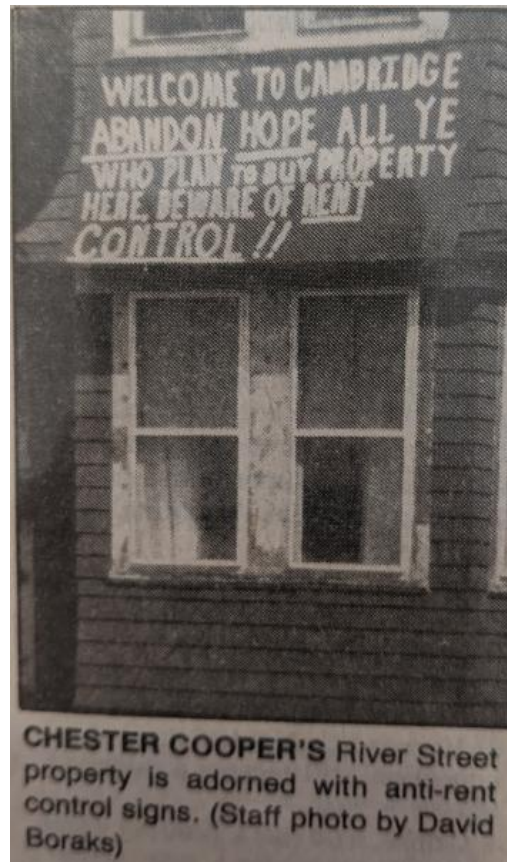
## **Case Study in Failure: George Tarvezian**

In Cambridge in 1991, rent control had already been through many variations after its initial passage in the 1970s. S.1447 opens the door to the same decades-long progression of increasingly draconian enforcement.

In 1991, the state's vague and empowering rent control law had got so bad that some landlords did not want to rent out what they perceived as undercapitalized housing (e.g., junk). George Tarvezian was one such landlord. He could not get approval to make needed repairs or to evict bad renters, so he started refusing to rent out his property, letting each unit stay vacant as it became vacant.

The city council hated George and, with the legislature’s approval, gave the rent board the power to compel him to rent his apartments. He refused again. So the rent board ordered the Cambridge Police to arrest him. They did! The modern-day equivalent would be calling ICE.

George spent six months in jail and was fined \$3,000 in 1991 dollars. **As a result of rent board actions, George stopped being a landlord and additional affordable housing disappeared.** Others followed suit, going so far as to paint their buildings with a warning to others not to own property in the city.



*Figure 12. The Cambridge Chronicle , Thursday December 6 (believed 1991), showing another landlord warning others not to buy property in Cambridge. Rent control grows out of control over time.*

## **Case Study in Failure: Laura and Vincent Bologna**

"We were young," says Laura, describing the decision the newlyweds made to purchase and restore the abandoned rooming house, which once upon a time (as Laura describes it) "had been beautiful." In addition to 310 Harvard Street, the Bolognas bought a house in Somerville, hoping to pay the mortgage from rental income.

They obtained the necessary permits and restored 310 Harvard Street to its original Victorian-era condition. The property had a carriage house at the rear, and that was where the Bolognas lived so that they could rent out the main building.

"We rented it to a mother and daughter," says Vincent. "They paid six months' rent, and then they sued us for overcharging."



The mother and daughter were Krenie and Maria Stowe. Not long after moving in, the Stowes went to the Cambridge rent control board and alleged that the Bolognas' property was subject to rent control. The board agreed and ruled that all eight units in 310 Harvard Street were rent controlled.

The Bolognas had to pay damages, including damages from the error they made handling the security deposit, an error that triggered the treble-damages-plus-legal-fees provision of the summary-process statute. From the Cambridge rent control board, the Bolognas took their case to the Superior Court and from there to the Appeals Court. Interested readers can read the case here: *Stowe v. Bologna*, 32 Mass. App. Ct. 612 (1992).

The Appeals Court affirmed the judgment in the amount of \$35,991.20 plus \$28,019.62 in legal fees. Representing doctors Maria and Krenie Stowe was Attorney Mark D. Stern, one-time counsel for the Tenants First Coalition.

Damages plus the Stowes' legal fees made for a grand total of \$64,010.82.

But that was not all. In addition to paying the Stowes' lawyers, the Bolognas had to pay their own counsel until the New England Legal Foundation (NELF) stepped in to help. Unfortunately for the Bolognas, NELF was unable to persuade the Supreme Judicial Court to overturn the decision.

Then they had to pay the Stowes' lawyers \$30,000.00 for the appeal. It was little consolation that this figure was \$50,000.00 less than those lawyers had requested.

So Laura and Vincent Bologna were stuck with not only the \$64,000.00 arising out of the Superior Court case, but an additional \$30,000.00 because they tried, unsuccessfully, to appeal. As a direct result, they could not make payments on their other house in Somerville. They saw it go into foreclosure and sought bankruptcy protection.



*Figure 13. This is the building at 310 Harvard St in Cambridge hand restored by the Bolognas. Their renters took advantage of them, didn't pay rent for five years, couldn't be evicted and illegally sublet at market rent. The Bolognas were fined \$64,000 by the rent board, had another \$30,000 in attorney fees, and ultimately lost the house to bankruptcy. They are not landlords anymore. in <https://goo.gl/maps/Kv3j2qrnFxMFHA5U9>*

The just cause eviction protections that aided and abetted the Stowes are exactly what is being called for in S.1447.

**As a result of rent control, Laura and Vincent stopped being landlords and additional affordable housing disappeared.**

## **Case Study in Failure: Helen and Peter Petrillo**

A well-known case of rent control disaster is memorialized on Magazine Street in Cambridge. Helen and Peter Petrillo owned a three-unit at the corner of Magazine and Chestnut Streets. Their daughter, who lived elsewhere, survived a fire in her home. So the Petrillos moved themselves into their basement, creating a fourth unit down there, and gave their owner-occupied unit upstairs to their daughter and her family.



*Figure 14. An official city marker remembers Peter Petrillo, dead of heart attack following a rent board order to jack up this building. CC BY-SA 4 MassLandlords Ericb.*



## What about the toll on elderly homeowners?

I want to thank Jeff Jacoby for taking to task the hypocritical doctors in Cambridge ("Liberals' arguments can kill you," op ed, Jan. 26). How foolish for these people to suggest that the end of rent control will result in the deaths of current tenants.

The orderly end of rent control will cause little disruption if the professional rent control advocates, their legislative supporters and people like these doctors would stop whining about its defeat and begin to work with people like Denise Jillson at the Massachusetts Homeowners Coalition to develop a state-funded program to cushion the elderly tenants without destroying the elderly landlord.

I am a 78-year-old widowed Cambridge homeowner. The tyranny of the professional rent control advocates forced my husband Peter and me to defend our right to allow our daughter and her husband and children to live with us after their house was destroyed by fire.

The tenants, politicians and professional advocates tried to force us to register our three-family, owner-occupied home with the rent control board because my husband and I moved into the

finished basement so that our daughter and her family could live with us. We won, but the battle was tremendously stressful and expensive. The victory was even more costly because the stress of dealing with a bureaucracy ultimately killed my husband. He died of a heart attack at the height of the battle.

When I went before the Cambridge City Council and pleaded for relief, I was told to "bury your husband. There is nothing we can do for you." I wonder where these concerned doctors were when the old rent control system was imposing strain on small-property owners.

My loss is not the "what if" kind suggested by these doctors; my loss is the kind that I live with every day.

HELEN PETRILLO  
Cambridge

...

*Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Letters should be 200 words or less; all are subject to condensation.*

*Mail address: Letters to the Editor, The Boston Globe, Boston MA 02107-2378.*

*The Internet address: [letter@globe.com](mailto:letter@globe.com)*

Figure 15. This letter to the editor by widow Helen Petrillo was published in the Boston Globe February 7, 1995 after rent control was repealed as the legislature extended rent control provisions two years for elderly renters and renters with a disability.

## **Specific Problems with S.1447 not already mentioned.**

### **The Bill Allows 0% Rent Increases**

The proposal calls for “CPI or 5%, whichever is lower.” This is already bad, but it’s pure distraction pricing from what’s to come! We have to string together two more sections to see the real rent limit. The text later reads, “Section 2. A city or town accepting this chapter may, by local charter provision, ordinance, by-law, majority vote of its governing body or through a local binding ballot measure impose a limit on the size of annual rent increases... Section 4 The limit on any annual rent increase for a covered dwelling unit as defined in Section 3(a) shall not exceed the [those limits].” This is essentially equivalent to rent control boards, which had individual discretion to disallow rents on a property-by-property basis and to hold increases to 0% year over year.

### **Rent Roll Back Punishes Renovations, Compounds Tariff and Climate Price Increases**

Section 4(b) would roll back rental amounts in rent-controlled units to the monthly rate that was charged 12 months prior to a municipality’s acceptance of this ordinance, at least in so far as an increase is allowed.

Imagine a property owner who just renovated a rental property expecting a return on investment from higher rents. That property owner would be required to calculate all rent increases from their former pre-renovation rent. This means they will be unable to increase again until inflation has eaten away at the improvement. They can never catch up, ever.

A dilapidated building that was 50% below market and has now been gut renovated to market will be unable to raise rents at all for at least 9 years, whatever inflation may be the next nine years. The math is the maximum allowable rate, 5%, compounded for n years, must meet or exceed the 50% appreciation from 12 months prior to the law’s passage.  $1.05^8 = 1.47$ , and  $1.05^9 = 1.55$ . Nine years must therefore elapse before the 50% rent increase is met. The owner will then still be behind present inflation. They have to use present inflation to make up for the missing 12 months.

If inflation were only 2% per year post-renovation, that will lower the maximum allowable rate. The landlord would then have to wait 21 years for a rent increase. And they will still be behind modern inflation. Assuming Senators Jehlen and Gomez understand math, we have to conclude they have cruel intentions.

Landlords would rightfully be outraged by this compelled revenue forfeiture, and it would result in numerous legal challenges. This is a clear and unconstitutional regulatory taking, exactly the kind of matter the Supreme Court of the United States has signaled it is seeking to revisit. This bill would result in a conflagration of injunctions and litigation that would bring all the worst attention to Massachusetts.

Finally, as with other forms of rent control, this proposed ordinance would have a similar effect of deterring rental upkeep and renovations.

## **Real Housing Costs, Especially Insurance, Rise Much Faster than Inflation**

If the bill drafters were sincere, they would have to recognize a limit of CPI + some percentage to account for the fact that local markets rarely follow the national consumer price index. Insurance alone has increased 20% year over year the last several years due to climate-related losses in other states (see, for instance, Vermont floods). The proponents of this bill are hoping anyone reading it will be distracted by the “CPI” and not realize the true intent to hold properties below inflation and thereby stop maintenance. This will reduce assessed values just like under rent control boards, feeding developers a steady stream of bargain teardowns.

## **Mom and Pop Landlords Will be Punished for Offering Below-Market Rent**

The proposal calls for implementation “no later than 180 days after adoption.” What temerity! The intent is to enact rent control as quickly as possible; these towns already have ordinances drafted and ready to go. They are hoping anyone reading the bill will be distracted by “180 days” and not realize they intend to give no one time to raise rents to market rate in advance. Many mom-and-pop housing providers already provide deep discounts to market rent because they have good renters who remain good knowing they can be evicted if they turn bad. Everyone rationally uses their rights to protect themselves and their family. Under the just cause eviction provisions of the bill, landlords could no longer be assured of good behavior because renters could not easily be removed. So any renter falling on hard times could easily transmogrify themselves into a professional tenant, largely insulated from risk of eviction by the impossible standards created, and by the removal of no-cause stated evictions. The bill would thus penalize mom-and-pop housing providers for having offered below-market rent.

## **It Gives Local Control of Decisions That Should Be Statewide, Which Will Worsen Housing Inequity**

Dividing a statewide issue into local control can be problematic on many levels. This is exactly the problem we see with zoning, where many choose lovely single-family lots as their preferred zoning, with the result that no one without the means to own can live in that community. This is wrong. Enabling local control to address the statewide problem of unaffordable housing will exacerbate the problem, balkanizing regulations, disincentivizing investment in some towns but not others, and promoting unequal housing opportunity from community to community. This is one reason why the state legislature enacted the Housing Choice Act and MBTA Communities Acts earlier last session, because local control of housing policy is not working.

## **Ensures Rent Controlled units will go to Wealthy Renters**

During the 1970s–1990s, rent controlled units were occupied by wealthy residents. This included Cambridge Mayor Ken Reeves, 1992 to 1995, who lived in a spacious rent-controlled apartment, and state Supreme Court Justice Ruth I. Abrams. This is because landlords who could not be assured of making repairs needed to rent to someone certain to take care of the place and certain to pay whatever rent was allowed.

## Summary of Problems with S.1447

This form of rent control would have little to no predictability for owners.

The rent cap is a distraction price, which is that allegedly rents can always increase by inflation. That is purposely misleading.

First, there is a cap such even in high inflation years, landlords will be held below market. There is no recognition whatsoever that landlords need to keep pace with real estate taxes, insurance, repairs and more each year. Second, the towns will decide how much of a return on investment is fair. Rent increases may be denied altogether for any reason the town decides.

Landlords would be forbidden from terminating a tenancy in order to renovate. Landlords would also be forbidden from relocating a renter temporarily, renovating, and putting them back at a higher rent. This guarantees our properties will fall behind on capital improvements.

Developers, who historically represent half of the bill drafters for rent control, stand to gain enormously. When rent-controlled properties are undercapitalized and allowed to rot, landlords eventually sell out at distressed prices.

This proposal has very little to do with helping low-income renters. It has a lot to do with beating down old owners and their buildings so that developers can redevelop the lots. And it has a lot to do with Boston not wanting to pay for the needed rental assistance.



*Figure 16. Sheila Dillion, Chief, Office of Housing Stability, addressing Boston City Council Feb 22, 2023 about how the vast majority of landlords are not raising the rent too fast. So why do we need this policy?*

## **A Return to Rent Control is Not the Answer**

Rent control is not the answer to a shortage of housing in Massachusetts, nor is it an effective measure for increasing affordable housing. Our past attempts at implementing rent control, in the 1970s into the 1990s, has demonstrated its inability to address the housing crisis.

Worse, the rent control legislation being proposed is written in a way that would result in duplicating the many of the poignant failures of that failed experiment.



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"The analysis of rent control is among the best-understood issues in all of economics, and -- among economists, anyway -- one of the least controversial. In 1992 poll of the American Economic Association found 93 percent of its members agreeing that 'a ceiling on rents reduces the quality and quantity of housing.' "

**Paul Krugman, New York Times, Reckonings; A Rent Affair**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/07/opinion/reckonings-a-rent-affair.html>

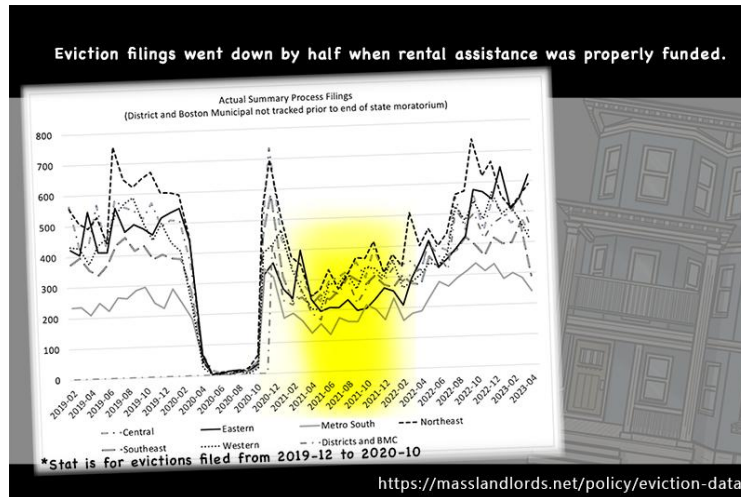
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## **Better Solutions to Housing Shortage**

Alternatively, we recommend a two-tiered approach to alleviating the housing crisis and encouraging growth in affordable housing statewide.

First, in the short term, we need rental assistance, and it has to work even for people the state deems unworthy. The nature of a safety net is it catches everyone. MassLandlords sued the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities to enforce a release of public records that would shed light on the agency's discriminatory and fraud-ridden distribution of rental assistance. One-third of applications were lost as of early 2022 and half rejected, and the problems are largely still with us. We hope the data can be released so that agencies can be made aware of changes needed to keep even more renters in their homes at lower cost.



*Figure 17. Rental assistance works! Eviction filings went down by half during the pandemic. Forced move-outs (levies of execution) went down by 90%. It must be properly funded and there must be the ability to apply upstream of court, and these two things will make a dramatic improvement in the day-to-day lives of tens of thousands of good renters.*

Second, in the long term, we need lots more housing. MassLandlords has long advocated for reform of the state's zoning laws. Specifically, we promote reform of outdated single-family zoning laws. This does not mean ending single-families, but it does mean freeing property owners who choose to build multi-families or accessory dwelling units on their property. As long as their plans comply with building code, there should be no obstacle we cannot overcome on zoning reform. Homeowners who choose to have a single-family house on a lot with several acres should be free to, of course. But those who choose to benefit by offering housing options on their lots should have that option too.

Single-family zoning laws disallow such options. By doing so, these laws deter growth in affordable housing that could be substantial.

There is no shortage of examples of other states and communities across the United States taking such steps to reform single-family zoning. California and Oregon lead the way among states creating laws intended to expand housing through zoning reform.

[California has passed](#) a slew of recent bills, packaged as [Building Opportunities for All](#), that allow property owners to subdivide parcels in two in order to build extra dwellings, such as duplexes and ADUs. Another bill gives municipalities the option to rezone neighborhoods in transit-rich and/or urban/infill areas to allow increased density of up to 10 homes per parcel. Other new laws in California allow residential housing to be built on commercially and retail-zoned properties, enable housing density increases and provide support for affordable housing projects, among other measures.

Oregon passed a law in 2019 disallowing cities with populations of more than 10,000 people from preventing duplex and townhouse construction on single-family zoned land.

In 2020, Minneapolis, Minn., became the first major U.S. city to ban single-family zoning in every neighborhood as part of its [Minneapolis 2040](#) comprehensive plan. The policy bans the prohibition of



building duplexes and triplexes on single-family zoned land citywide. Washington, D.C., has taken recent steps to allow the construction of ADUs in most residential zones.

In Massachusetts, the [Housing Choice Law](#) passed in 2020 was a start. The accessory dwelling unit provision of the 2024 housing bond bill was a tiny step forward, as well, although at 10,000 units forecast over 5 years relative to 200,000 needed today, it is wholly inadequate.

Rent control would only move us backward in the pursuit of equal housing opportunity and ought not pass.

## **Addenda**

Last year MassLandlords sent flyers like the attached to elected officials in the associated towns including city councils.

For further reading, visit [RentControlHistory.com](https://rentcontrolhistory.com).

# What will Boston Rent Control cost the City of Brockton?

Did you know Boston, Cambridge and Somerville have filed rent control with the legislature? If the legislature approves, this will start a chain reaction that will reduce Brockton's State Aid.

## ■ RENT CONTROL REDUCES ASSESSED VALUES

In 2012, MIT Economist David Autor published a peer-reviewed paper looking at the increase in assessed value after rent control ended<sup>1</sup>. Rent control was outlawed in 1994. Assessed values increased 20% over the next ten years specifically because rent control was repealed. He corrected for general inflation and market effects. Flipping his math, we estimate rent control will reduce today's assessed values by 15%.

Total City Budget	FY 24 Revenue from Local Taxes	Lost revenue if rent control enacted there
Boston	3,128,000,000	469,200,000
Cambridge	476,549,430	71,482,414
Somerville	242,383,780	36,357,567
<b>Total:</b>		<b>577,039,981</b>

If Boston, Cambridge and Somerville enact rent control, they will need \$500 million a year from State Aid. (If Brockton enacted rent control, you would need \$25,915,556 in State Aid.)

## ■ BROCKTON'S REAL ESTATE ENABLES CITY GOVERNMENT

**35%** of Brockton's revenue comes from local taxes.

State Aid is an important part of your budget.

## ■ BROCKTON'S FY 2024 STATE AID:

**\$274,755,077**

## ■ BROCKTON'S SHARE OF STATE AID LOST TO BOSTON:

**(\$24,735,952)**

Given a fixed pot of money from the state, Boston rent control will cost Brockton **\$24,735,952**. Ask your representative and senator to vote against rent control in all its forms. What can help people with high housing costs? Make rental assistance work better. Also, help us create more housing while preserving what we love about our neighborhoods. For more information or to schedule a one-on-one zoom, email [hello@masslandlords.net](mailto:hello@masslandlords.net).

**Similar analysis applies to TOPA/renter right of first refusal!**

<sup>1</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.



# What will Boston Rent Control cost the City of Fall River?

Did you know Boston, Cambridge and Somerville have filed rent control with the legislature? If the legislature approves, this will start a chain reaction that will reduce Fall River's State Aid.

## RENT CONTROL REDUCES ASSESSED VALUES

In 2012, MIT Economist David Autor published a peer-reviewed paper looking at the increase in assessed value after rent control ended<sup>1</sup>. Rent control was outlawed in 1994. Assessed values increased 20% over the next ten years specifically because rent control was repealed. He corrected for general inflation and market effects. Flipping his math, we estimate rent control will reduce today's assessed values by 15%.

Total City Budget	FY 24 Revenue from Local Taxes	Lost revenue if rent control enacted there
Boston	3,128,000,000	469,200,000
Cambridge	476,549,430	71,482,414
Somerville	242,383,780	36,357,567
<b>Total:</b>		<b>577,039,981</b>

If Boston, Cambridge and Somerville enact rent control, they will need \$500 million a year from State Aid. (If Fall River enacted rent control, you would need \$19,834,943 in State Aid.)

## FALL RIVER'S REAL ESTATE ENABLES CITY GOVERNMENT

**32%** of Fall River's revenue comes from local taxes.

State Aid is an important part of your budget.

## FALL RIVER'S FY 2024 STATE AID:

**\$227,045,373**

## FALL RIVER'S SHARE OF STATE AID LOST TO BOSTON:

**(\$20,440,691)**

Given a fixed pot of money from the state, Boston rent control will cost Fall River **\$20,440,691**. Ask your representative and senator to vote against rent control in all its forms. What can help people with high housing costs? Make rental assistance work better. Also, help us create more housing while preserving what we love about our neighborhoods. For more information or to schedule a one-on-one zoom, email [hello@masslandlords.net](mailto:hello@masslandlords.net).

Similar analysis applies to TOPA/renter right of first refusal!

<sup>1</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.

# What will Boston Rent Control cost the City of Lawrence?

Did you know Boston, Cambridge and Somerville have filed rent control with the legislature? If the legislature approves, this will start a chain reaction that will reduce Lawrence's State Aid.

## ■ RENT CONTROL REDUCES ASSESSED VALUES

In 2012, MIT Economist David Autor published a peer-reviewed paper looking at the increase in assessed value after rent control ended<sup>1</sup>. Rent control was outlawed in 1994. Assessed values increased 20% over the next ten years specifically because rent control was repealed. He corrected for general inflation and market effects. Flipping his math, we estimate rent control will reduce today's assessed values by 15%.

Total City Budget	FY 24 Revenue from Local Taxes	Lost revenue if rent control enacted there
Boston	3,128,000,000	469,200,000
Cambridge	476,549,430	71,482,414
Somerville	242,383,780	36,357,567
<b>Total:</b>		<b>577,039,981</b>

If Boston, Cambridge and Somerville enact rent control, they will need \$500 million a year from State Aid. (If Lawrence enacted rent control, you would need \$13,851,459 in State Aid.)

## ■ LAWRENCE'S REAL ESTATE ENABLES CITY GOVERNMENT

**23%** of Lawrence's revenue comes from local taxes.

State Aid is an important part of your budget.

## ■ LAWRENCE'S FY 2024 STATE AID:

**\$299,380,126**

## ■ LAWRENCE'S SHARE OF STATE AID LOST TO BOSTON:

**(\$26,952,923)**

Given a fixed pot of money from the state, Boston rent control will cost Lawrence **\$26,952,923**. Ask your representative and senator to vote against rent control in all its forms. What can help people with high housing costs? Make rental assistance work better. Also, help us create more housing while preserving what we love about our neighborhoods. For more information or to schedule a one-on-one zoom, email [hello@masslandlords.net](mailto:hello@masslandlords.net).

**Similar analysis applies to TOPA/renter right of first refusal!**

<sup>1</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.

# What will Boston Rent Control cost the City of Lowell?

Did you know Boston, Cambridge and Somerville have filed rent control with the legislature? If the legislature approves, this will start a chain reaction that will reduce Lowell's State Aid.

## ■ RENT CONTROL REDUCES ASSESSED VALUES

In 2012, MIT Economist David Autor published a peer-reviewed paper looking at the increase in assessed value after rent control ended<sup>1</sup>. Rent control was outlawed in 1994. Assessed values increased 20% over the next ten years specifically because rent control was repealed. He corrected for general inflation and market effects. Flipping his math, we estimate rent control will reduce today's assessed values by 15%.

Total City Budget	FY 24 Revenue from Local Taxes	Lost revenue if rent control enacted there
Boston	3,128,000,000	469,200,000
Cambridge	476,549,430	71,482,414
Somerville	242,383,780	36,357,567
<b>Total:</b>		<b>577,039,981</b>

If Boston, Cambridge and Somerville enact rent control, they will need \$500 million a year from State Aid. (If Lowell enacted rent control, you would need \$28,051,348 in State Aid.)

## ■ LOWELL'S REAL ESTATE ENABLES CITY GOVERNMENT

**34%** of Lowell's revenue comes from local taxes.

State Aid is an important part of your budget.

## ■ LOWELL'S FY 2024 STATE AID:

**\$314,004,000**

## ■ LOWELL'S SHARE OF STATE AID LOST TO BOSTON:

**(\$28,269,497)**

Given a fixed pot of money from the state, Boston rent control will cost Lowell **\$28,269,497**. Ask your representative and senator to vote against rent control in all its forms. What can help people with high housing costs? Make rental assistance work better. Also, help us create more housing while preserving what we love about our neighborhoods. For more information or to schedule a one-on-one zoom, email [hello@masslandlords.net](mailto:hello@masslandlords.net).

**Similar analysis applies to TOPA/renter right of first refusal!**

<sup>1</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.

# What will Boston Rent Control cost the City of Lynn?

Did you know Boston, Cambridge and Somerville have filed rent control with the legislature? If the legislature approves, this will start a chain reaction that will reduce Lynn's State Aid.

## ■ RENT CONTROL REDUCES ASSESSED VALUES

In 2012, MIT Economist David Autor published a peer-reviewed paper looking at the increase in assessed value after rent control ended<sup>1</sup>. Rent control was outlawed in 1994. Assessed values increased 20% over the next ten years specifically because rent control was repealed. He corrected for general inflation and market effects. Flipping his math, we estimate rent control will reduce today's assessed values by 15%.

Total City Budget	FY 24 Revenue from Local Taxes	Lost revenue if rent control enacted there
Boston	3,128,000,000	469,200,000
Cambridge	476,549,430	71,482,414
Somerville	242,383,780	36,357,567
<b>Total:</b>		<b>577,039,981</b>

If Boston, Cambridge and Somerville enact rent control, they will need \$500 million a year from State Aid. (If Lynn enacted rent control, you would need \$24,058,872 in State Aid.)

## ■ LYNN'S REAL ESTATE ENABLES CITY GOVERNMENT

**33%** of Lynn's revenue comes from local taxes.

State Aid is an important part of your budget.

## ■ LYNN'S FY 2024 STATE AID:

**\$304,919,002**

## ■ LYNN'S SHARE OF STATE AID LOST TO BOSTON:

**(\$27,451,583)**

Given a fixed pot of money from the state, Boston rent control will cost Lynn **\$27,451,583**. Ask your representative and senator to vote against rent control in all its forms. What can help people with high housing costs? Make rental assistance work better. Also, help us create more housing while preserving what we love about our neighborhoods. For more information or to schedule a one-on-one zoom, email [hello@masslandlords.net](mailto:hello@masslandlords.net).

**Similar analysis applies to TOPA/renter right of first refusal!**

<sup>1</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.

# What will Boston Rent Control cost the City of New Bedford?

Did you know Boston, Cambridge and Somerville have filed rent control with the legislature? If the legislature approves, this will start a chain reaction that will reduce New Bedford's State Aid.

## ■ RENT CONTROL REDUCES ASSESSED VALUES

In 2012, MIT Economist David Autor published a peer-reviewed paper looking at the increase in assessed value after rent control ended<sup>1</sup>. Rent control was outlawed in 1994. Assessed values increased 20% over the next ten years specifically because rent control was repealed. He corrected for general inflation and market effects. Flipping his math, we estimate rent control will reduce today's assessed values by 15%.

Total City Budget	FY 24 Revenue from Local Taxes	Lost revenue if rent control enacted there
Boston	3,128,000,000	469,200,000
Cambridge	476,549,430	71,482,414
Somerville	242,383,780	36,357,567
<b>Total:</b>		<b>577,039,981</b>

If Boston, Cambridge and Somerville enact rent control, they will need \$500 million a year from State Aid. (If New Bedford enacted rent control, you would need \$26,939,652 in State Aid.)

## ■ NEW BEDFORD'S REAL ESTATE ENABLES CITY GOVERNMENT

**40%** of New Bedford's revenue comes from local taxes.

State Aid is an important part of your budget.

## ■ NEW BEDFORD'S FY 2024 STATE AID:

**\$261,378,926**

## ■ NEW BEDFORD'S SHARE OF STATE AID LOST TO BOSTON:

**(\$23,531,709)**

Given a fixed pot of money from the state, Boston rent control will cost New Bedford **\$23,531,709**. Ask your representative and senator to vote against rent control in all its forms. What can help people with high housing costs? Make rental assistance work better. Also, help us create more housing while preserving what we love about our neighborhoods. For more information or to schedule a one-on-one zoom, email [hello@masslandlords.net](mailto:hello@masslandlords.net).

**Similar analysis applies to TOPA/renter right of first refusal!**

<sup>1</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.

# What will Boston Rent Control cost the City of Newton?

Did you know Boston, Cambridge and Somerville have filed rent control with the legislature? If the legislature approves, this will start a chain reaction that will reduce Newton's State Aid.

## ■ RENT CONTROL REDUCES ASSESSED VALUES

In 2012, MIT Economist David Autor published a peer-reviewed paper looking at the increase in assessed value after rent control ended<sup>1</sup>. Rent control was outlawed in 1994. Assessed values increased 20% over the next ten years specifically because rent control was repealed. He corrected for general inflation and market effects. Flipping his math, we estimate rent control will reduce today's assessed values by 15%.

Total City Budget	FY 24 Revenue from Local Taxes	Lost revenue if rent control enacted there
Boston	3,128,000,000	469,200,000
Cambridge	476,549,430	71,482,414
Somerville	242,383,780	36,357,567
<b>Total:</b>		<b>577,039,981</b>

If Boston, Cambridge and Somerville enact rent control, they will need \$500 million a year from State Aid. (If Newton enacted rent control, you would need \$65,759,247 in State Aid.)

## ■ NEWTON'S REAL ESTATE ENABLES CITY GOVERNMENT

**89%** of Newton's revenue comes from local taxes.

Great work! You're supporting yourself!

## ■ NEWTON'S FY 2024 STATE AID:

**\$35,505,563**

## ■ NEWTON'S SHARE OF STATE AID LOST TO BOSTON:

**(\$3,196,534)**

Given a fixed pot of money from the state, Boston rent control will cost Newton **\$3,196,534**. Ask your representative and senator to vote against rent control in all its forms. What can help people with high housing costs? Make rental assistance work better. Also, help us create more housing while preserving what we love about our neighborhoods. For more information or to schedule a one-on-one zoom, email [hello@masslandlords.net](mailto:hello@masslandlords.net).

**Similar analysis applies to TOPA/renter right of first refusal!**

<sup>1</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.

# What will Boston Rent Control cost the City of Quincy?

Did you know Boston, Cambridge and Somerville have filed rent control with the legislature? If the legislature approves, this will start a chain reaction that will reduce Quincy's State Aid.

## ■ RENT CONTROL REDUCES ASSESSED VALUES

In 2012, MIT Economist David Autor published a peer-reviewed paper looking at the increase in assessed value after rent control ended<sup>1</sup>. Rent control was outlawed in 1994. Assessed values increased 20% over the next ten years specifically because rent control was repealed. He corrected for general inflation and market effects. Flipping his math, we estimate rent control will reduce today's assessed values by 15%.

Total City Budget	FY 24 Revenue from Local Taxes	Lost revenue if rent control enacted there
Boston	3,128,000,000	469,200,000
Cambridge	476,549,430	71,482,414
Somerville	242,383,780	36,357,567
<b>Total:</b>		<b>577,039,981</b>

If Boston, Cambridge and Somerville enact rent control, they will need \$500 million a year from State Aid. (If Quincy enacted rent control, you would need \$45,641,250 in State Aid.)

## ■ QUINCY'S REAL ESTATE ENABLES CITY GOVERNMENT

**75%** of Quincy's revenue comes from local taxes.

State Aid is an important part of your budget.

## ■ QUINCY'S FY 2024 STATE AID:

**\$64,900,000**

## ■ QUINCY'S SHARE OF STATE AID LOST TO BOSTON:

**(\$5,842,889)**

Given a fixed pot of money from the state, Boston rent control will cost Quincy **\$5,842,889**. Ask your representative and senator to vote against rent control in all its forms. What can help people with high housing costs? Make rental assistance work better. Also, help us create more housing while preserving what we love about our neighborhoods. For more information or to schedule a one-on-one zoom, email [hello@masslandlords.net](mailto:hello@masslandlords.net).

**Similar analysis applies to TOPA/renter right of first refusal!**

<sup>1</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.



# What will Boston Rent Control cost the City of Springfield?

Did you know Boston, Cambridge and Somerville have filed rent control with the legislature? If the legislature approves, this will start a chain reaction that will reduce Springfield's State Aid.

## ■ RENT CONTROL REDUCES ASSESSED VALUES

In 2012, MIT Economist David Autor published a peer-reviewed paper looking at the increase in assessed value after rent control ended<sup>1</sup>. Rent control was outlawed in 1994. Assessed values increased 20% over the next ten years specifically because rent control was repealed. He corrected for general inflation and market effects. Flipping his math, we estimate rent control will reduce today's assessed values by 15%.

Total City Budget	FY 24 Revenue from Local Taxes	Lost revenue if rent control enacted there
Boston	3,128,000,000	469,200,000
Cambridge	476,549,430	71,482,414
Somerville	242,383,780	36,357,567
<b>Total:</b>		<b>577,039,981</b>

If Boston, Cambridge and Somerville enact rent control, they will need \$500 million a year from State Aid. (If Springfield enacted rent control, you would need \$39,391,006 in State Aid.)

## ■ SPRINGFIELD'S REAL ESTATE ENABLES CITY GOVERNMENT

**30%** of Springfield's revenue comes from local taxes.

State Aid is an important part of your budget.

## ■ SPRINGFIELD'S FY 2024 STATE AID:

**\$545,267,551**

## ■ SPRINGFIELD'S SHARE OF STATE AID LOST TO BOSTON:

**(\$49,089,947)**

Given a fixed pot of money from the state, Boston rent control will cost Springfield **\$49,089,947**. Ask your representative and senator to vote against rent control in all its forms. What can help people with high housing costs? Make rental assistance work better. Also, help us create more housing while preserving what we love about our neighborhoods. For more information or to schedule a one-on-one zoom, email [hello@masslandlords.net](mailto:hello@masslandlords.net).

**Similar analysis applies to TOPA/renter right of first refusal!**

<sup>1</sup> Housing Market Spillovers: Evidence from the end of rent control in Cambridge Massachusetts, National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2012.



**Selected Housing Provider Comments.**

**MassLandlords solicited written testimony from subscribers over a 24 hour period.**

**30 submissions were received for inclusion here.**

**The following comments are unedited and unchanged from their original authors  
except to remove phone numbers.**

# Amherst

**Dear senators Patricia Jehlen and Adam Gomez**

I am a small landlord in Amherst Massachusetts (2 residential condos). All government is doing is punishing small landlords and rewarding LLCs and private equity companies who have the resources to sue and withstand any bad economic waves. People like me DO NOT HAVE THAT ABILITY. My profit margin is very low. When I perform repairs and renovations, it comes out of my small profit margin. If you freeze rents for small and medium local landlords you will be DESTROYING and driving out of business the only landlords who treat tenants with respect. Large corporations nickel and dime tenants and leave them without any recourse.

How about consulting local, small and medium landlords before creating rules for solutions you THINK you have ? The high rents and price gouging is not the case of small landlords who are in this business to survive and feed their families - Not to accumulate millions like private equity companies.

Thank you

Renata Shepard

Amherst MA

# Boston

South Atlantic LLC  
Rod Stanbrook  
Uli Nagel  
100 Columbia St  
Lee, MA 01238

To whom it may concern,

we own a total of 20 rental units in Pittsfield and North Adams and are writing to strongly oppose the proposed bill regarding rent control 194 S.1447 by Senators Jehlen and Gomez.

While we absolutely share the concern and see the need for more affordable and quality housing in MA, we believe that this bill will have the opposite effect. Rent control not only costs communities in lost revenue but will stop landlords from renovating and improving on properties.

It is already very hard to make a living as a small landlord, the state's laws are favoring tenants to a sometimes absurd degree. Not being able to raise rents when a unit has been significantly updated will take away yet another incentive to provide decent housing. In our case, most our units are below so-called market rent, because we know our tenants and do not want to take undue advantage of them.

I strongly urge you to take another approach to protect renters from speculative landlords, without throwing small companies like ours under the bus.

Sincerely,

Uli Nagel, Rod Stanbrook

## South Boston

I oppose control the rent control bill filed by Senator Jehlen! It will empower and create professional tenants, who will drive out good landlords and good renters. It will also pull new investments out for more units in Boston making apartments harder to find apartments in Boston.

Sincerely,

Lawrence M Travers

Nancy J Travers

South Boston

## Medford

How are the proponents of this rental freeze propose to help us, the wicked landlords, with our water bills, our insurance bills, our maintenance bills? They should go to Target, pick up a week's worth of necessities, and then walk through the register without paying... they will be stopped at the door, since they are stealing. Same with this proposal: I have paid for the necessities of my property, but they plan to walk through the register and not give me my due for maintaining, insuring, keeping the water flowing, etc. Ergo, they are stealing from me, aren't they? The results are clear: buildings in disrepair, fires without a chance of rebuilding, less rentals available. Unbelievable!

Christina Ferla, Medford

# Uxbridge

Good morning,

I oppose this legislation, I believe that this will harm housing affordability and reduce long term supply. I also fear that this would lead to lower quality housing. It will lead to less maintenance and reduced renovations.

Thank you

Rick Cipriano

UXBRIDGE



# Worcester

Dear Sirs,

My husband and I own a single family with an in-law apartment that we completed gutted 4 years ago.

I'm not sure we qualify because of the in-law apartment/1 apartment.

We did not do anything cheap, we did granite countertops, \$500 faucets \$200 light fixtures, new windows, in unit high-end stackable laundry etc.

We went through the city for all permits.

We have also transformed the outside of the house, new siding, new windows in our living area as well. We have also completely transformed the landscaping and added an outdoor firepit, eating area, tranquil water area, enlarged our driveway and so much more.

We wanted to attract high end renters; we are off of Salisbury St in Worcester MA.

All for the Residents/tenants to enjoy. We do not have separate electric or water meters, so our rent is all inclusive. This year when the electric bills went from \$360 a mnth to \$1,000, the rent the Residents/tenants were paying did not cover the new electricity amount. If we were no able to increase the rent at the end of the lease it could be a problem for us.

I don't see rent control working for anyone, any town or city. It's not just about the renovations other situations also need to be considered. If a landlord does not have water and electric meters for each resident/tenant this could add a significant cost to the bottom line.

Kathy Wilson

26 Carter Rd

Worcester MA 01609

## Stoughton

How is rent control going to improve the quality of units?

How Will it improve the condition of units in need of repairs?

Will cities/towns force insurance companies to freeze their rates for rental property AND not allow them to leave this state??

Will it force cities and towns to freeze or REDUCE the property taxes since owners will not be able to increase rents to cover any increases?

Will adjustable rate mortgages not be allowed to increase rates (ever) in these cities or towns affected by this program?

What is the updated state/county policy for evicting tenants with criminal activity OR lease violations?

I see rent control as a way for cities and towns to eliminate small property owners by creating a financial deficit and forcing them to sell to large property management companies. It's the 1960's and 70's all over again.

Thank you,

Tracey Maggio

Stoughton

PROPERTY MANAGER and REALTOR

# Pittsfield

To Boston State House Legislature

From landlord—Alex Blumin, 16 Hamlin St, Pittsfield, MA 01201

The U.S. citizen since 1999—Originally from Odessa, Ukraine, USSR—Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—which collapsed in 1991.

## Opposition to Senators Patricia Jehlen, Adam Gomez cruel, indefinite rent freeze for recently renovated properties.

#1)I, Alex Blumin, landlord of two Rental buildings in Pittsfield, Massachusetts consider the Rent Freeze Bill as a Socialist/Communist attempt to destroy all and any Private Property Ownership in State of Mass.

#2 I oppose Venezuela and Cuba Socialist extremist movements to undermine

United State Capitalist system which brought Prosperity and Wealth to this Nation.

#3 We have our God given Right guaranteed by Federal and State Constitution to run

Rental business and get a profit as it is Legitimate and allowed under the Laws.

#4 Freezing the Rent is equal to freezing any Rental business activity and investments while taxes and inflation are not Frozen.

#5 Can you freeze Food Price? Can you freeze Oil and Gas Price? No! No! No!

Can you freeze Property taxes, water and sewer, insurance, maintenance, repairs? No!

#6 I will fight those Senators in State and Federal Court –they should be prepared for that!

#7 No Passaran! No Socialista! No Communista! No Lenin! No Stalin! No Rent Freeze~!

**Opposition submitted by me personally today, July28/2025 at 8:00pm**

**Sincerely---Property Owner, the U.S. citizen, supporter of American Economic Capitalism---Alex Blumin, 16 Hamlin St, Pittsfield, MA 01201.**

**AMEN.**

# Cambridge

To the Housing Committee:

Re: legislation for a new rent control law

Rent control was a disaster in Cambridge. It benefitted a few lucky, or well-connected tenants as was well documented by Arthur Maringas, a former government auditor. Please read, below, my *Short History of Rent Control* that I wrote for the April 2022 issue of the SPOA Newsletter.

Thank you for your consideration,

Linda B. Levine

26 Mt. Auburn Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

617 256-4595

## Short History and the Metrics of Rent Control in Cambridge

Under pressure from tenant organizing, the Massachusetts legislature passed the Enabling Act of 1970 allowing cities with over 50,000 residents to limit rents in buildings that were constructed before 1969. Buildings with three or less units were exempted from the law. Those cities were Cambridge, Boston, Brookline, Somerville, and Lynn. Despite initially adopting rent control, four cities eventually moved away from strict controls:

- o Lynn repealed rent control in 1974
- o Boston approved vacancy decontrol in 1974
- o Somerville's Board of Aldermen repealed rent control in 1979
- o Brookline phased out most of its rent-controlled units in 1991

While other municipalities moved away from controls, Cambridge went in the opposite direction. Cambridge alone had the strictest form of rent control and kept adding regulations. They earned tongue-in-cheek moniker, People's Republic of Cambridge. A five-member rent control board was created. Its members were appointed by the Cambridge city manager who in turn was appointed by the nine city councillors. The rent control board was a quasi-legal body that conducted hearings about rent increases, evictions, and landlord tenant disputes. Rules of evidence applied at hearings. Most landlords were unprepared and highly offended by the adversarial nature of interactions at hearings. They bridled at the accusation of gold plating and disallowance of reimbursement for many home improvements. They suspected the pro tenant administrative staff was advising tenants on how to challenge their landlords.

One of the most infamous examples of the tyranny of the Rent Control Board was the case of Helen and Peter Petrillo. In 1988, they were ordered by the Rent Board to jack up their Victorian three-family home in Cambridgeport to legalize a low-ceiling apartment in their basement, turning the three family into a four-family house, and thus under rent control. On the day the order arrived, Peter Petrillo had a heart attack and later died.

Robert Montcreiff was a Cambridge City Councillor who voted for rent control. He explained his thinking on an episode of a popular local CCTV show, *Cambridge Inside Out*, that aired in 1996. He said, "Times were very different in 1970. It was a different world – Lyndon Johnson's Model Cities were great, landlords were wicked, and no one studied anything."

The Small Property Owners Association was formed in 1987 by a handful of small landlords. They asked for reform of rent control laws and presented the Cambridge City Council with a list 26 grievances. Other cities with rent control were easing their regulations, but Cambridge was becoming more restrictive. There were hours upon hours of discussion in housing committee hearings and in front of the Cambridge City Council, but not one reform resulted. By 1993 the Cambridge Rent Control handbook had swelled to 103 pages of regulations.

Cambridge renters were in the majority by about five tenants to each owner. They were not going to vote to raise their rents. Politicians exploited this situation and didn't budge an inch on reform to the system. John E. McDonough, a former Massachusetts state representative, described this in his book, *experiencing politics, A Legislator's Stories of Government & Health Care*. He devoted a chapter to the rent control story in Cambridge explaining why there could be no change or reform in Cambridge. He cited an old political theory called the Iron Triangle. Simply defined, it is an alliance of bureaucracy (the Rent

Control Board), legislature (the Cambridge City Council) and lobby (the Cambridge Civic Association, Cambridge Tenants Union and the Eviction Free Zone).

Bureaucracy

Lobby

Legislature

The Iron Triangle

Partially in response to the criticisms leveled by SPOA, the city commissioned a study of the system by a Cambridge consulting group, Abt Associates, Inc. It was known as The Abt Report. The study showed that rent-control tenants were predominantly young, white, single adults or childless couples. Incomes were virtually identical with market rate tenants. Still, the City Council did not enact reform because they had the power of the Iron Triangle to preserve the status quo.

At about the same time, in 1988, another Cambridge resident named Arthur Maringas, an engineer and a federal auditor by profession, began to suspect that something was amiss in the way rent controlled and unregulated property was taxed by the city. He called the Abt Report a “political masterpiece because everybody thought the report substantiated their viewpoint.” Maringas explained, in front of the City Council, that he didn’t have a viewpoint, he was just an engineer looking at data to come up with a viewpoint.

The Abt Report had 545 units in its data base. The Maringas report had 12,385. Using public data, Mr. Maringas examined every single rent- controlled unit and to the extent possible, every single rent-controlled tenant. He worked pro bono and spent hours working from lists and records only available at the Cambridge Rent Control Board. He cross referenced rent controlled units with public data. When he presented his research to the city council he explained somewhat ironically that doing his work was like reading a good novel as his findings were so dramatic and revealing.

For instance, by cross referencing tenant addresses with the city’s auto excise tax records he learned that many rent-controlled tenants drove luxury cars. Other more specific findings he found were:

- o Only 13% of the tax subsidized rent-controlled units were occupied by people 62 and older.



- o 32% of the doctors in the City of Cambridge lived in tax-subsidized rent- controlled units.
- o 39% of the lawyers in the City of Cambridge lived in tax-subsidized rent-controlled units

# Newton

To whom it may concern,

Please do not pass this bill. Masslandlords has done extensive research regarding all of the concerns. Please listen.

--

*Sincerely,*

*David M. Poles, Investor, Property Manager*

[www.tamaiproperties.com](http://www.tamaiproperties.com)

617-981-1186

10 Langley Road

Suite 401

Newton Centre, MA 02459

*Tamai Properties*

*"We purchase and manage multi-unit properties, giving our residents a home, not just housing."*

## Lowell

To all it may concern,

I am writing to oppose rent control. I currently own 10 rental units. Four of my units are currently rented by Section 8 Tenants.

I am writing because I have tenants often for over 10 years before they leave, and when they leave, the unit must be completely rehabbed. The rehabs cost thousands of dollars and therefore I need to raise the rent considerably when the unit is rehabbed. The taxes go up, the trash removal goes up and just recently the insurance has gone up quite considerably. The water rates go up and my tenants do not pay for their water, so it goes to me to pay when they waste water and or do not report leaks. I often learn of a leak when what should have been a \$300-\$400 water bill is then \$1000+ when it arrives quarterly. I do my best to keep my rents reasonable especially for tenants who have rented from me for a long time, but newly renovated units need higher rents. Please consider this.

Thank you,

Kimberly Karner

Lowell

## Cambridge

I own a two family in Cambridge, which will certainly incorporate rent control with enthusiasm.

I bought the house in '89. It had never been registered with Rent Control (RC), and I had a horrible woman rent from me in '90. Not only did she leave her little dog in the dirt basement crapping and pissing while at work every day, but she questioned RC about whether my house had really never been listed with them.

This triggered a full on investigation by RC. They confirmed that they had no record of the house being registered in the past. BUT THAT WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH! RC required that I collect all the electric bills since the initiation of RC in the '70's to prove that the house had always been owner-occupied. I tried. I called (then) NStar to get those records, and was told they did not have them for more than 5 years.

When I told RC, they told me I had to get those records anyway! Imagine! Was I supposed to forge them?!

Rent Control was founded in the '70's. By the time I had to interact with them in 1990, they had become a nasty, ideologically driven bureaucracy. Think: IRS. If you, say, bought a house in 1982 that was registered with rent control in 1975, every subsequent rental increase from 1975 on had to be approved by RC. You replaced the roof this year? We'll give you an increase of \$25 monthly income! Drips and drabs of increases (for which one had to fight) until landlords simply walked away from their properties. They could recoup nearly nothing through rent, and eventually the rent would fall so far below market value that landlords could not even pay their taxes, nevermind the repairs!

You could walk all over Cambridge at that time and see abandoned houses even in the best of neighborhoods. Then you would know that the rent control board had driven that poor landlord to ruin. And their ruination was also the destruction of available housing!

And the city waged a PR campaign against the landlords for not making necessary repairs. WITH WHAT? They could not even pay their taxes!

When RC was finally disbanded by the electorate, we had a "grace period" wherein those who were in much needed rent control apartments were allowed to apply to the City for an extension of rent discount. 13% of those renters applied, leaving a mere 87% who had obviously never even needed the housing discount in the first place! Those 87% had received blistering discounts on their housing costs over DECADES by way of bankrupting landlords! A 3B apartment in W. Cambridge for \$250? Super!

Why is it OK to provide affordable housing on the back of one segment of the population? In addition to the HUGE bureaucracy required for its administration?

The City should set up an account funded by ALL Cambridge taxpayers, require renters to qualify for these discounts, and administer the process with neutrality. It's fine for the City to create affordable housing. We all want economic diversity. So if everyone wants its, everyone can pay for it: one little department, 3 employees to look over applications, and 2 that are ELECTED to oversee and prevent nepotism. Done!

We don't need new confiscatory laws for a narrow segment of the population. Cambridge could set up this City-wide taxpayer fund tomorrow...

SO WHY DON'T THEY?

Jill Monahan

Cambridge

## Belchertown

My name is Laura Hicks and I own a small number of rental houses in westernMass.

As a small landlord, I am concerned that that rent freeze will eventually put me out of business. The expenses to maintain my properties keeps rising: water usage, electricity, insurance, materials for repairs, etc. Also, many of the new government regulations have added great expense. For example, changing the building code requiring for all common hallways to have motion lighting or permanent lighting has cost me thousands of dollars in electrician fees. Also, I cannot do an eviction by myself any more and the last lawyer fee I had for this procedure was close to \$10,000.00!!

If my expenses keep rising, but my income is capped, how could I stay in business?

This path of rental regulation will lead to more slum conditions maintained by absent landlords who can survive under rent caps. Please let "the little guy" stay in business and we'll keep our rental properties in a desirable condition.

Sincerely,

Laura Hicks

Merciful Management, LLP

Belchertown



# East Boston

Dear Chairs and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Massachusetts Bill S1447, which would reintroduce rent control under the guise of local tenant protections. While well-intentioned, this legislation would repeat the same policy failures we've seen elsewhere — most recently and dramatically in Argentina, where rent control caused severe distortions in the housing market, ultimately hurting the very renters it aimed to protect.

## Argentina: A Cautionary Tale of Rent Control Failure

In 2020, Argentina passed strict rent control legislation mandating three-year leases, caps on annual rent increases, and bans on foreign currency payments. Initially celebrated as a win for tenants, the real-world result was a **\*\*sharp contraction in rental housing supply\*\***, as many landlords chose to remove properties from the market altogether. By 2023, **\*\*one in seven homes in Buenos Aires stood vacant\*\***, and rental availability plummeted.

When President Javier Milei repealed the rent control law in December 2023, the market responded immediately:

- Rental listings surged by over 170% within months — showing how much supply had been artificially withheld under rent control.
- Real rental prices (adjusted for inflation) fell by as much as 40%, giving renters more choices at more affordable rates.
- Landlords and tenants were once again free to negotiate terms that fit both parties — including payment in foreign currency, shorter leases, and flexible adjustments to inflation.

These outcomes confirm what economists have warned for decades: rent control reduces supply, discourages maintenance and new construction, and ultimately drives up long-term costs for renters.

### Massachusetts Already Tried This — And It Failed

Massachusetts had rent control until 1994. In the years after it was repealed, housing investment increased, neighborhoods revitalized, and rental stock improved. Do we really want to turn back the clock on that progress?

If rent control is reinstated, we will likely see:

- Landlords pulling units off the market or converting to condos or short-term rentals.
- Reduced incentive to maintain properties, especially for smaller landlords.
- Declining housing quality and availability — particularly in Boston and surrounding urban centers.

### Real Solutions Must Encourage Supply, Not Punish It

Instead of reintroducing failed top-down policies, we should be focusing on:

- Zoning reform to allow for more housing density.
- Incentives for new rental construction, especially affordable and workforce housing.
- Targeted subsidies or vouchers for low-income renters without distorting the entire housing market.

In conclusion, Argentina's experience shows that rent control does not protect tenants — it shrinks the market, drives up real costs, and creates unintended consequences that hurt

both landlords and renters. Massachusetts should learn from this example and reject S1447 in favor of sustainable, market-based solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Zhenwei Chu

101 St Andrew Road, East Boston 02128

## Webster

If Mass Gov want rent control then:

Do not increase property taxes and water and sewer bills.

Also,

The gov do not care if landlords needs to pay higher insurance premiums every year.

Hector Rivera

Webster

## Somerville

In the 1980's I was a real estate agent that served Somerville and Cambridge. Cambridge was under rent control and Somerville was not. Many multi-family properties were often in such disrepair compared to comparable properties in Somerville due to the inability of Cambridge owners to afford to maintain or renovate as a result of their mandated rental rates. When rent control ended, owners were able to afford to renovate, thus increasing the property value and the city tax base.

I currently own rental property in Somerville and am retired. I've personally managed the real estate for many years. I rely on that income to support my family. The property owners pay the real estate taxes in every community, not the tenants, we should not be restricted in a free market system.

—Michael McLaughlin

Sent from my iPhone

Somerville

# Boston

I am against Thee bill proposed by Jehlen and Gomez.

Having been a landlord during the last “ rent control “ years in Boston I do not want to live through it it again.

Jim Duffy

Boston



# North Grafton

Good evening,

Opposing rent control - From a residential real estate brokers perspective:

When landlords are limited in how much rent they can charge, they may have less incentive—or financial ability—to upgrade or properly maintain their properties. This, in turn, can negatively affect neighborhood appeal, property values, and the broader housing market, which impacts both homeowners and agents alike. Additionally, reduced investor interest can slow new rental development, worsening the housing supply issue that rent control aims to fix.

Moreover, the root issue isn't landlords raising rents—it's that the state hasn't kept pace with the rising cost of living. In particular, Section 8 voucher limits have not been adequately adjusted, making it harder for low-income families to compete in today's rental market. Rather than implementing rent control, a more effective solution would be to modernize and expand state housing assistance programs to reflect real-world costs, ensuring support for vulnerable tenants without stifling the housing market.

We are in the middle of a housing crisis across the board and it is unfair to blame landlords alone. The state needs to step up: landlords WELCOME section 8 vouchers, but those vouchers need to be a market rent!

Sincerely,

Alise Bartolini  
Associate Broker  
Realtor®

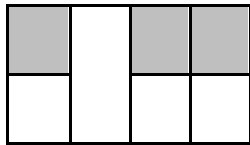
ABR, SRS, GREEN, PSA, AHWD, C2EX  
Castinetti Realty Group

Emails sent or received shall neither constitute acceptance of conducting transactions via electronic means nor shall create a binding contract in the absence of a fully signed written contract unless the specific email contains within it a statement that it is to be considered a binding obligation.

## Brighton

There is a reason that rent control was repealed by a ballot question in 1994: it was counterproductive. Any time government interferes with the free market, the economy suffers. In this case the same old problems will rear their heads: (1) housing stock will decay because of the inevitable disparity between rents and repairs; (2) the small landlords, who generally charge less than the market anyhow, in order to keep good tenants, will suffer disproportionately, while the mega-holders will ride it out; (3) real estate tax revenues will stagnate or fall. And those are just three of many other problems.

Kill this toxic bill.



Rouvain Bension

PCPA LLC

310 Summit Avenue

Brighton, MA 02135-7504

# Northborough

Rachel Manley

52 Pinehaven Drive

Northborough, MA 01532

I am writing in regards to the Hearing Tuesday, July 29 (194 S.1447 Jehlen, Gomez). I am a small landlord with one building of two units. This is my retirement and I have been renting it with under market rent to lower income tenants to help them out. I often do not raise the rent at all except when new tenants move in, which is something I need to do to keep up with the higher taxes, utilities, insurance and material and labor costs for repairs to keep the building up to code. If rent control were enacted, this would impact my and many landlords ability to keep the buildings up to standard. Landlords use rent increases to make repairs and upgrades for the tenants to improve their living situation. This legislation is severely flawed and would end up in less quality housing being available for tenants. Rent control was tried in Massachusetts before and it was a total failure. The whole state recognized that fact. It has not become a better idea over time.

Thank you for your time, Rachel Manley

# West Springfield

Marci & Charlie Cooley

60 Neptune Ave

West Springfield, MA 01089

We are writing to oppose rent control in Massachusetts.

We own 2 Two family homes. One in West Springfield, and one in Westfield. These homes have been in my family for over 40 years. Rents have been on the low side (well under market rate). When we took over ownership, we realized that each unit needed a full top to bottom renovation to be in compliance with the current laws and we wouldn't want it any other way. In order to do this we have invested heavily into each unit. They are currently not rented (3 are vacant and under various stages of renovation and a family member lives in the other). If we are not able to rent them out at market rate then we will have lost money, and will continue to lose money.

This bill is cruel. We understand the need for affordable housing, but this is not the way to do it. Rent control was tried in Massachusetts before and was such an utter failure they got rid of it. What has changed so much since then that it would be any different now?

Please keep in mind that a more reasonable version of rent control already exists under Chapter 40P.

As we have educated ourselves about the potential impact of this bill it is clear to us that it is expensive to the state as a whole, invites discrimination, and encourages unevictable professional tenants.

Please DO NOT PASS this bill.

Sincerely,

Marci & Charlie Cooley

# Leominster

Date: 7/28/2025

Subject: Testimony Letter Regarding Proposed Rent Control with Alternatives that Protect Both Tenants and Small Landlords

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Lisa Mayer, and I am writing today as a single woman on disability who owns and lives in a four-family home. This is not an investment empire—it's my home. Now, with rising costs, a fixed income, and proposed rent control, I'm at risk of losing the ability to sustain my property.

For years, especially while I was working, I've kept rents low. I believed in being fair and compassionate, giving people a safe and respectful place to live. But now, because of physical limitations, I am unable to work or handle the labor required to maintain the building and turning over the apartments myself. I must hire help, and I rely on rental income to keep the property safe and functional.

Rent control offers no relief for the costs that keep increasing—taxes, insurance, utilities, repairs and the mortgage I still owe. My property taxes alone increased by \$750 a month, yes, you heard that correctly, \$750 a month. I also had to take out a \$45,000 loan last year just to replace the roof. That loan alone is a heavy burden. I cannot see or afford to revert to rent levels a year ago. I live on a small, fixed disability income. I've been denied assistance because I "make too much"—even though my apartment building ran at a loss last year over \$3300. I do not take an income from it. I can't even afford a replacement for my car, which has a lot of issues. The cost of living has exploded. There is no cap on my expenses, no control over property taxes or inflation.

Shifting the weight and expecting landlords to absorb the cost of the housing crisis sidesteps meaningful reform and creates additional challenges with long term risks for both renters and property owners. I don't believe in, nor have I ever squeezed tenants for profit. I do believe everyone deserves a safe and respectful home where they can feel secure and have a stable place to live. I never imagined that keeping rents affordable would one day be used against me—locking me into rates far below what it actually costs to maintain the property.

If my rental income is frozen or tightly restricted, I won't be able to afford the basic upkeep of these apartments, never mind invest in improvements. I won't be able to upgrade old kitchens, replace aging appliances, or fix infrastructure. Just one emergency—a broken furnace or water heater—could send me into debt I may never recover from. Rent control will not help this situation, it will only make the Rental crisis worse while exposing landlords to legal threats if we cannot afford maintenance requirements, never mind improvements.

I take pride in my property. I always hire the Board of Health to inspect and issue a Certificate of Compliance before renting out any unit. I want my tenants to live in safe, dignified homes. But if rent control becomes law, even good landlords like me will be forced to cut corners. Not by choice, but by necessity. This is how slums are created—not by neglect, but by broken systems.

I'm not an investor. I'm not a corporation. I'm your neighbor. I'm a small-time landlord trying to continue to keep a roof over my head along with 3 families within our community. I care about my tenants, I care about my building, my property, and my community. I am not out to make a profit. But this kind of law makes it harder—not easier—for small landlords to survive.

Instead of rent control, I urge you to consider real solutions that encourage maintenance, safe housing and support long-term affordability. Solutions that don't punish the small landlords, the very people who built these communities. We need a balanced approach.

We all want affordable housing—but it must be sustainable. We need to find real solutions. We need a balanced approach. Rent control sounds good on paper, but in practice, it puts small landlords in a financial chokehold. And ultimately, it will worsen the housing crisis by driving us out of the market, while big corporations come in who only look at their bottom line. Please don't make it harder for those of us who are trying to do the right thing.

While we all agree affordable housing is critical, rent control puts the burden solely on small landlords like myself—many of whom are retirees, disabled, or living paycheck to paycheck. There are real, workable alternatives to rent control that can help families afford housing without putting small landlords in financial jeopardy.

Below are several policy alternatives and program proposals that support and protect tenants while still allowing “mom and pop” landlords, like myself, to maintain, repair, and sustain their properties.

#### 1. Tax Incentives for Keeping Rents Affordable

What it is: Landlords who voluntarily keep rent below market levels receive local or state tax rebates or reductions..

How it helps tenants: Encourages affordability without legal rent caps.

How it helps landlords: Offsets lost rental income with reduced property taxes or credits.

Proposal Example: Offer annual property tax rebates to landlords who keep rent under a certain threshold tied to local income levels.

#### 2. Direct Relief for Landlords Maintaining Affordable Housing

What it is: Grants or forgivable loans for landlords who agree to keep rents stable and maintain their units.

How it helps tenants: Keeps rents predictable and units livable without legal caps.



How it helps landlords: Helps cover maintenance and repair costs, especially for older buildings.

Proposal Example: A “Landlord Stability Fund” that reimburses smaller landlords for capital repairs or emergency maintenance if they commit to fair rental pricing.

### 3. Rent Support Through Income-Tied Tenant Rebates

What it is: Income-based tax relief or housing credits. Tenants receive a monthly or yearly cash rebate or housing credit if their rent exceeds a certain portion of their income.

How it helps tenants: Reduces rent burden without interfering in rent setting.

How it helps landlords: Landlords are paid full market rent directly by tenants.

Proposal Example: A “Renter’s Tax Credit” at the state level that puts cash back into renters’ hands based on their housing cost burden.

### 4. Tenant Savings Match or Emergency Funds

What it is: Public-private matched savings programs or emergency rental assistance for tenants facing sudden hardship (job loss, illness, etc.).

How it helps tenants: Prevents evictions and housing instability.

How it helps landlords: Avoids non-payment of rent and long legal processes.

Proposal Example: Create a community-backed rental savings match fund where tenants who save \$500 get \$500 in emergency support credits.

### 5. Zoning Reform + Incentives for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

What it is: Help homeowners build and rent in-law units, garage apartments, or basement suites by easing zoning restrictions and offering small grants or loans.

How it helps tenants: Increases affordable rental supply without massive developments.

How it helps landlords: Helps small landlords expand and offer new, lower-cost units.

Proposal Example: A municipal grant program to help homeowners build ADU's or convert garages or basements into rental units with affordability commitments and ease zoning restrictions.

## 6. Voluntary Affordability Agreements (with Support)

What it is: Landlords opt into agreements to keep rents stable for several years in exchange for various forms of support—grants, tax abatements, repair support or free business/legal consulting.

How it helps tenants: Offers rent predictability and stable housing.

How it helps landlords: Offers stability, legal protections, and financial tools in return for goodwill.

Proposal Example: A “Community Landlord Partner Program” that pairs affordable rent pledges with direct business assistance and tax relief.

## 8. Incentivized Rent-to-Own Programs

What it is: Long-term tenants build equity toward homeownership.

Benefits:

- Promotes stability and tenant investment.
- Helps landlords transition units to buyers they know and trust.

## 9. Good Landlord Recognition & Grants

What it is: Rewards for landlords who provide safe, affordable housing.

Benefits:

- Encourages pride and accountability.
- Helps mom-and-pop landlords stay afloat.

#### 10. Affordable Housing Tax Credits for Individuals

What it is: Extend Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) access to small landlords.

Benefits:

- Encourages individual participation in affordability.
- Shifts support from developers to neighborhood property owners.

#### 11. Energy & Maintenance Grants

What it is: Assistance to improve heating, insulation, plumbing, etc.

Benefits:

- Reduces utility costs for tenants.
- Helps landlords maintain older buildings without raising rents.

Proposal: Fund a “Green Rental Rehab” program for small landlords.

#### 12. Emergency Assistance Funds for Small Landlords

What it is: Local fund landlords can access for critical repairs or non-payment situations—  
if they agree to affordability terms.

Benefits:

- Stabilizes small landlords during hardship.
- Preserves housing stock.

### 13. Shared Housing and Roommate Matching

What it is: Nonprofit-run matching services connecting renters with fixed-income homeowners or those with extra rooms.

Benefits:

- Expands affordable options creatively.
- Builds community and mutual benefit.

### 14. Property Management Co-ops

What it is: Small landlords pool resources to share vetted maintenance, legal, and accounting services.

Benefits:

- Cuts costs.
- Improves quality and sustainability.

### 15. Tenant Financial Literacy & Homeownership Prep

What it is: Education and savings tools for renters to build toward buying or long-term renting.

Benefits:

- Reduces turnover.
- Builds tenant responsibility and stability.

Already in place but keeping them and making them more available...

## 7. Targeted Rental Assistance or Subsidy Programs (Keeping Section 8 etc.)

What it is: Government-funded programs that help low- and moderate-income tenants pay part of their rent, regardless of the landlord's pricing.

How it helps tenants: Keeps rent affordable without needing price caps.

How it helps landlords: Landlords receive full, timely rent, including guaranteed payments for eligible tenants.

Proposal Example: Expand local housing voucher programs (like Section 8 or state-level equivalents) and streamline the application process for both landlords and tenants to reduce red tape.

## 8. Energy & Maintenance Assistance for Landlords

What it is: Grants or subsidized loans to upgrade insulation, heating, plumbing, and roofs in rental buildings.

How it helps tenants: Improves living conditions and energy affordability without rent hikes.

How it helps landlords: Reduces maintenance burden and operating costs, freeing up funds that might otherwise lead to rent hikes.

Proposal Example: A “Green Rental Rehab” program offering \$10,000-\$30,000 in matching funds for small landlords making energy-efficient or critical updates.

## Closing Thoughts

Rent control may sound like a solution—but it risks disincentivizes maintenance, punishes and drives out small landlords, and ultimately reduces the quality and quantity of affordable housing. These alternative strategies keep housing affordable, maintain safety

standards, and allow small landlords to create lasting affordability without crushing the very people who are keeping their communities livable.

Please support balanced, community-first solutions that protect both renters and the responsible property owners who are trying to do the right thing.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Mayer

Leominster, MA 01453

At the end of the night, before you close your eyes, be content with what you've done and be proud of who you are.

Let your smile 😊 change the world, 🌍 never let the world change your smile ❤️ †

## Pittsfield

Dear Members of Joint Committee on Regions and Municipalities,

Like my Dad before me I have invested in neglected two family homes. I chose to not invest in buildings that had more than two units because of the potential for social stress. I have been more than forty years as a mom and pop landlord.

I chose to make nice apartments inside and out and included rules that were lawful and enforceable. My business model was to attract tenants that would be good neighbors, mind the rules and report broken and or repairs that are needed and pay the rent on time. I always kept my rents just a tad under the market averages so I had tenants with good credit and good sanitary practices (most of the time)...I have had many repeat tenants and have lost good tenants due to the fact they go on to purchase their own home. I do enjoy a reputation as an owner that responds swiftly when a tenant calls for any reason. Replace hot water tank in less than 24-48 hours, I contract with heating company if a heating device stops working the contractor will fix in less than 24 hours. What ever needs fixing it is done fairly quick...In Massachusetts many Judges and Court systems do not enforce rules upon the tenants that are clearly damaging physical property and neglect to pay the rent because they know the Court at best will only force them to vacate and not enforce the financial loss. These losses add to the cost of renting ... I have had to build into my rents a percentage for this potential.

At one time I was a Democrat and Republican..... now I am Independent or unenrolled. The Democrats have lost the ability to enforce the rules .

Therefore loose the ability to win elections.

Rent control will artificially force owners to cut back on swift repairs with quality material and workmanship, no incentive for aesthetics and long term quality of life.

Please Vote no on S-1447.

Truly,

Dominick Villane

Pittsfield, Ma. 01201

Sent from my iPhone

## Dorchester Center

Hello,

Massachusetts has a housing problem but the state is going the wrong way about fixing the issue at it's core. To be honest, it's not just housing that's expensive here. The cost of living is high for everyone. However it seems like politicians are hell bent on making it impossible for landlords especially small landlords to thrive. There are so many limitations and restrictions that we must abide by and they all cost money. It doesn't seem like the state cares about the people providing the quality housing. It seems to be all about the tenants. I was the victim of a violent tenant and I spent over a year going back and forth to court. It was the first time as a first time homebuyer where I truly recognized the state's abandonment of homeowners. Bringing up rent control without providing any support to landlords while costs continue to rise for repairs, taxes, insurance, etc. makes zero sense. We really need our representatives to get a clue and take some basic economics classes. Everything is about supply and demand. Just because some ideas sound good doesn't mean that they actually are. Homeowners are not the reason for the state's high cost of living. Less housing with high demand equals high housing costs. Build and provide more housing and that should decrease the housing costs.

Wildia Capre

Dorchester Center





Tetrault Real Estate, LLC  
888 Maple St  
Fall River, MA 02720

To: Whom it May Concern

This letter expresses opposition to rent control in Massachusetts. While the desire to address rising housing costs and support tenants is understandable, rent control is believed to be a misguided policy that will ultimately harm both tenants and the overall housing market long-term.

Massachusetts banned rent control statewide in 1994. However, efforts to restore it, or a variation termed "rent stabilization," continue to emerge. As history and economic studies demonstrate, rent control measures often lead to unintended and detrimental consequences for the housing stock and the market as a whole.

Our specific arguments are as follows:

- **Reduced Housing Supply:** Limiting a landlord's ability to charge market rate rents disincentivizes investment in new housing construction, which ultimately exacerbates the housing shortage.
- **Deterioration of Housing Quality:** Capping rent increases can reduce the profitability of rental units, leading some landlords to neglect property maintenance and repairs as they struggle to cover costs. This can result in a decline in the quality of the available housing stock over time.
- **Discouraged Investment:** Rent control sends a negative signal to real estate investors, making them less likely to invest in the creation and upkeep of rental housing in rent-controlled areas. This can be particularly damaging in my home city of Fall River, which is already struggling to meet the housing demand created by the recent completion of the Commuter Rail line.
- **Unfair Burden on Property Owners:** Rent control places the financial burden of a social problem – affordable housing – disproportionately on private property owners rather than the broader public or government programs designed to address such issues.

- **Limited Economic Mobility:** Rent control can discourage tenants in desirable, rent-controlled units from moving, even when a larger space or a move to a different area might better suit their evolving needs. This can stifle economic mobility and prevent individuals from pursuing opportunities in other locations.

Instead of enacting rent control, we need to focus on strategies that promote increased housing production, reduce the cost of construction, streamline the permitting process, and support programs that directly assist low-income renters, such as rental vouchers. These approaches are more likely to create a healthy and sustainable housing market that benefits everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Aaron Tetraault  
Tetraault Real Estate, LLC

Lee Dillard Adams

36 Horne Drive

Sutton MA 01590

July 29, 2025

To whom it may concern;

I am a small landlord in Worcester Massachusetts writing to ask you to oppose rent control (S.1447.)

In 1986, I bought my three-decker in Worcester. I lived there myself for 15 years, raising my two sons. Over the years, I have had dozens of tenants. I have always considered market (HUD) rates in setting my rents (I set them slight below market) and I generally do not raise rent on tenants during their tenancy. This practice has allowed me to renovate my apartments for each turn over in tenants, to de-lead the building in the early 90s, re-side and replace windows in the last decade and generally keep the building in beautiful condition. At the same time, it has allowed many of my tenants to have a stable, affordable, safe home and many have saved and bought a house as their next residence.

S 1447 specifically and rent control in general would make it impossible for me to keep the condition and quality of my apartments at the level it should be. The rent control proposal is contrary to the goals of providing safe, affordable housing because as the cost of labor and materials rise, property owners like myself, hamstrung by rent control, will not have sufficient funds to make needed repairs and improvements.

Rent control is bad public policy.

High rents are a problem in Massachusetts – including here in Central Mass. My 21-year-old grandchild still lives at home and is having trouble finding an affordable apartment. I completely agree that more affordable (non-subsidized) housing is needed. Rent control, however, is not the way to provide it.

Thank you,

Lee Dillard Adams

12 Parley Vale  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

July 28, 2025

Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
jointcommittee.municipalities&regionalgovernment@malegislature.gov

Dear House Chair Jack Lewis and Senate Chair Rebecca Rausch:

My wife and I have owned and managed a 6 family in JP for 49 years. When an apartment is available we rent at market rate. After that, for at least the next 10 years, we do not raise the rent. When our tenants leave, they often have been able to save enough money to buy their own home.

We have lived through rent control in Boston. If your rents were low when rent control went into effect, that was the base rent, it was almost impossible to provide quality housing.

The current bill would be devastating to our tenants and to our method of funding repairs and improvements to the building.

Our building was built in 1929, and like much of the housing stock from this era, it will require significant investment to move it towards carbon-neutral. Electrical systems will need to be upgraded, weatherization improved, entire heating systems replaced. This is in addition to the continued maintenance required for an almost 100 year old wood frame building.

Since its beginnings and until recently we have been members of City Life / Vida Urbana. When Mayor Wu created the Rent Stabilization Advisory Committee, including affordable housing advocates, tenants, big developers of new construction but no landlords like us, we decided not to continue our City Life membership.

Big developers get a free pass in your bill, allowed to charge whatever they want in their new buildings for 5 years, well after their investors will have cashed out. Then, their base rent will be their sky high rents, affordable only to an elite few.

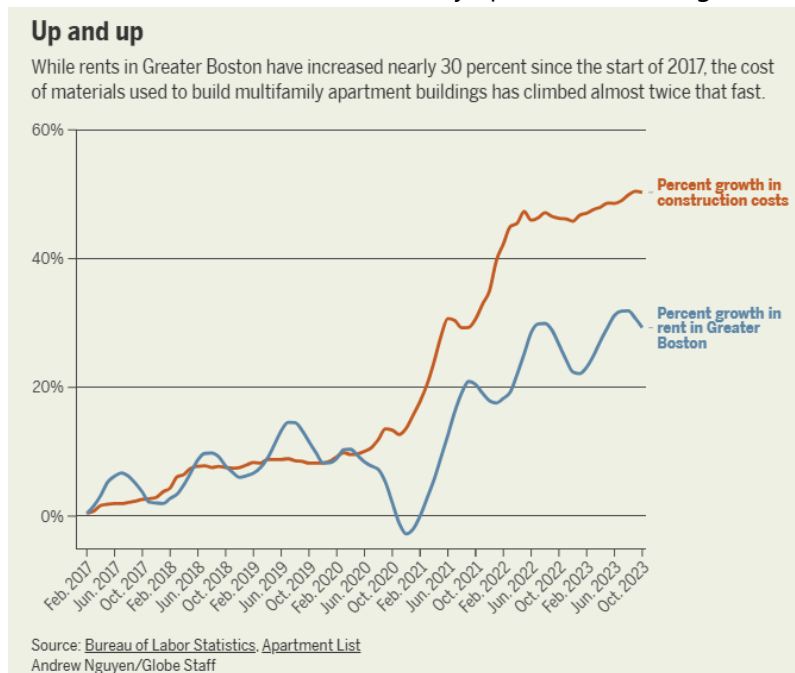
We would like to be able to offer our tenants EV chargers and Heat Pumps with central air like they do, our tenants deserve that. Your bill makes that impossible. What is your long term plan, bulldoze the existing housing stock for them?

Small landlords are not the cause of our housing problems, in spite of what Vida Urbana and Housing For All claim. We agree that Corporate investors are bad for our communities. Address that.

Consider:

- according to the U.S. Federal Housing Finance Agency, All-Transactions House Price Index for Boston, MA (MSAD),
  - home prices have gone up 249% since 2010.
- according to Homes for All,
  - Since 2010, landlords have raised rent by 55% on average for a two-bedroom apartment in Massachusetts,

- The monthly cost of owning an entry-level home in Greater Boston increased by more than \$1,500 a month over the last three years.
- according to a Boston Globe Spotlight Boston on Housing series in 2023 by Tim Logan, Catherine Carlock
  - While rents in Greater Boston have increased nearly 30 percent since the start of 2017, the cost of materials used to build multifamily apartment buildings has climbed almost twice that fast.



It would be a big mistake to turn over housing policy to organizations like Vida Urbana and Housing For All. Their skill-set is lobbying and community action, they know nothing of what it takes to provide quality, affordable housing. Their Rent Control and TOPA (tenants first right of refusal) programs are deeply flawed. When it comes down to it, you need local businesses to produce and manage and improve our housing stock. Support that.

Sincerely,

Timothy and Peri McKenna

(857)498-2574

mckenna.tim@gmail.com, perimckenna@gmail.com

cc:

- Rebecca L. Rausch [Becca.Rausch@masenate.gov](mailto:Becca.Rausch@masenate.gov)
- Jack Patrick Lewis [Jack.Lewis@mahouse.gov](mailto:Jack.Lewis@mahouse.gov)
- Katie McCann [communications@clvu.org](mailto:communications@clvu.org)
- carolyn@homesforallmass.org
- apark@mlri.org
- Michelle Wu [311@boston.gov](mailto:311@boston.gov)



**SARAH GETOFF, M.Ed., LMHC**

sarah@sarahgetoff.com

80 Damon Rd. #7302 ♦ Northampton ♦ MA ♦ 01060 ♦ 413-586-3653

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to oppose the bill that is up for consideration regarding Rent Control in Massachusetts (194 S.1447 Jehlen, Gomez). I am a small landlord; I own only one (1) rental condo which I bought after a recent divorce left me with significantly less family income than before. This bill would create a significant hardship for me for the following reasons.

- 1) I listed and rented the apartment immediately after buying it because I am dependent on the income to meet my post divorce expenses.
- 2) In my rush to rent it, and due to the off season time of the rental, I set the rent lower than market rate in order to rent it as quickly as possible.
- 3) After deciding the rent, there were significant and unexpected issues with the apartment and the first tenant, both of which cost me additional money.
- 4) I need to be able to raise the rent in order to cover my costs and make a fair profit. I am not a wealthy person or a landlord with multiple properties. I have renovated an affordable apartment and, even with an increase, my property is one of the most affordable in Northampton.
- 5) If I am not able to raise the rent as my expenses increase then I will be compelled to sell the property which will further decrease affordable rental options for people in my community.
- 6) Small, community minded landlords such as myself often suffer due to laws that are passed to protect tenants from wealthy and unscrupulous landlords. Perhaps the bill could be amended to include only landlords with over 10 or over 25 units, or with cumulative units totalling over a certain amount of value?

Please amend (to exclude small landlords) or vote against Rent Control in Massachusetts (194 S.1447 Jehlen, Gomez). My financial security depends upon an amendment or a "NO" vote. Thank you for your consideration.

*Warmly,  
Sarah*

Sarah Getoff

To Massachusetts Legislative Committee Hear testimony on: 194 S.1447 Jehlen, Gomez  
Proposed Rent Control Ordinance  
July 28, 2025

From: Peter Bronk, Mgr  
Urban Lights LLC  
217 Derby St.  
Newton, MA 02465

I write as a resident of Waltham and founder of a small company which owns and manages small residential rental properties in Waltham and other communities.

We strongly oppose this proposed ordinance, including, but not limited to:

- a) Provisions on Just Cause Evictions
- b) Caps on rent increases, especially those providing local option to municipalities to set any arbitrary limit, including allowing for no increases

Our experiences:

Our first multifamily was the home in which we lived for nearly 20 years and in which we raised our children, starting over 40 years ago.

In the intervening years we have had experiences with tenants in buildings we later acquired which illustrate the injustice to landlords, the bad economics, and the potentially bad consequences to existing or future tenants, of the proposed provisions. Some of these are as follows:

- 1) Just Cause Eviction. In a recent situation one tenant in a recently acquired small frame building would come home from work and blast recorded music or play his drums. We received numerous complaints from other tenants, and the police were called on several occasions. He also smoked, which was not permitted, and other tenants complained about that as well. For 18 months we told the tenant about the problems and were given assurances it would not happen again, but the peace was always disturbed and the tenant became confrontational to others in the building. Two other tenants told us they were leaving because of the situation. Consulting our attorney, we were told that a for-cause eviction could be more time consuming, subjecting our other tenants to continued violations of their rights to quiet enjoyment of the property. It would also be more costly, in part because the court would likely give the tenant extra time to comply with the rules, even with police reports this had not happened. We initiated a no-fault eviction. The tenant, knowing he would not prevail, decided to find another place without having a court hearing, and this in fact helped the existing tenant avoid an eviction record.

- 2) Cap on rent increases. We ordinarily keep rent increases relatively low to retain tenants who pay rent on time and maintain their apartment in good condition. In one such situation, two roommates had lived in a 3BR unit for several years, and rent was at least 20% below market. They brought in a new 3<sup>rd</sup> roommate, and a few months later the original roommates asked to leave because of concerns about the 3<sup>rd</sup>, who assured us he would find new housemates. However, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person was unsuccessful, stopped paying, and was evicted. We, however, lost many months of rent plus legal fees. Upon his departure, it was necessary to do work to restore the unit. Where this work includes such expensive items as kitchen, bath, or flooring replacement, why should we be limited in setting a new rent to bring the apartment up to market, even for a refurbished apartment, which would help us recoup some of the money lost during the eviction process and the money spent to repair the unit. At the same time our city property taxes (Somerville) have gone up, our insurance costs have skyrocketed, and the costs for repairs and maintenance are much higher than just a few years ago. This proposal is far worse than the vacancy decontrol which was in effect for many years in Boston, since even a court-ordered vacancy would not permit a rent increase.
- 3) Cap on rent increases: Another experience with tenants who were living in a building acquired from another landlord. They were an elderly couple on a fixed income and the rent was very low, perhaps half of market rent, and we kept increases minimal. After a few years the husband passed away and the wife moved out-of-state to be with an adult child. The apartment needed substantial renovation, which cost 10s of thousands of dollars. Again, it would have made little sense to spend that kind of money if no increase could be made, or to leave the apartment in disrepair. And how would the proposed caps have helped the elderly, fixed-income original tenants, if it made our desire to help them by minimizing rent increases impossible because we would be stopped from raising it more when they left? Will the state pay a subsidy for under-market apartments, or the city reduce our property taxes? I wish they would, but think not.

We believe that another effect of any rent control ordinance will be to decrease tenant turnover, since tenants will be incentivized not to move, reducing the number of units becoming available at any given time.

Sincerely,



Peter Bronk, Mgr



# H. Levenbaum Realty, Inc.

Est. 1923

1534 Dorchester Avenue  
Dorchester, MA 02122  
P 617.825.3900  
F 617.825.0102

RE: Rent Control or Rent Stabilization:

S.1447 An Act enabling cities and towns to stabilize rents and protect tenants

To whom it may concern,

As a small property owner who has provided affordable housing in Dorchester for more than 30 years, I deeply understand the urgency of addressing the housing crisis in Massachusetts. I appreciate the intent behind S.1447 and your commitment to protecting tenants, but the approach must be more holistic to avoid unintended harm.

When rent is the only cost subjected to regulation, while property taxes, insurance premiums, maintenance expenses, and compliance with carbon emission mandates, such as BERDO, continue to rise unchecked, the result is predictable: a deteriorating housing stock. We've seen this in Boston's subsidized housing, where HUD inspections consistently uncover chronic maintenance failures. Officials often cite insufficient rental income as the reason. If S.1447 is enacted without addressing these cost pressures, we risk repeating those failures on a broader scale.

Consider this:

- Insurance premiums have risen over 20% annually, far outpacing CPI.
- Tradespeople and materials have become costlier, with no relief in sight.
- Energy efficiency and carbon emission mandates add compliance costs with no offsetting support.

Why should rent alone be capped when other essential costs remain market-driven? If housing is a human right, so is food. Yet we don't impose price controls on groceries or insurance. We must address all cost drivers fairly, not single out one segment of the ecosystem.

I urge you to reconsider the structure of this bill. A sustainable housing policy must include:

- Incentives or subsidies to offset rising operating costs
- Balanced cost containment across sectors, not just rent
- Support for small landlords who maintain affordable housing without public funding

Please ensure that legislation intended to protect tenants does not end up compromising the very housing they rely on. I'd welcome the opportunity to discuss this further or provide testimony if helpful.

Looking forward to your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brokers:

Alan G. Issokson

Hyman Levenbaum (1905-1989)

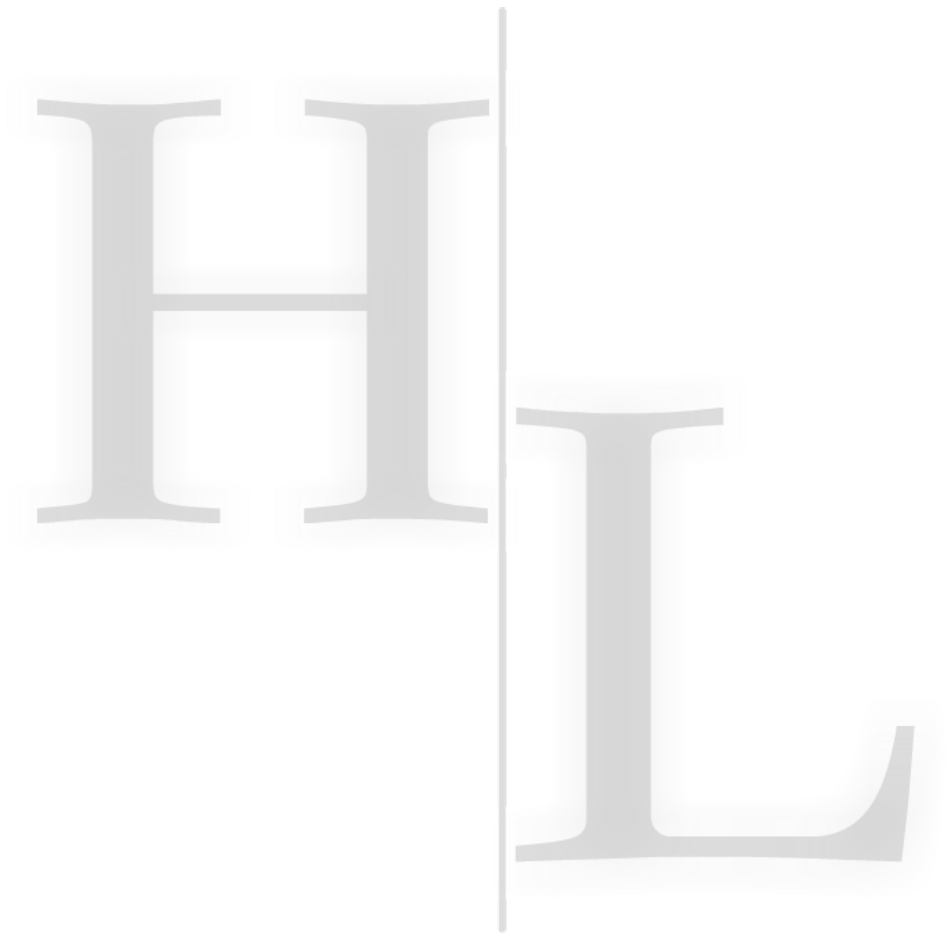
# H. Levenbaum Realty, Inc.

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Alan Issokson



Brokers:  
Alan G. Issokson  
Hyman Levenbaum (1905-1989)