

Roberta DiMezza

From: Jeremy Booth <user@votervoice.net>
Sent: Sunday, March 16, 2025 10:17 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: OPPOSE H5264 & 5676

Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

From: Jeremy Booth
21 Murphy Cir
Middletown, RI 02842
Artbooth16@gmail.com
(401)480-8855

To: The House Judiciary Committee, Rhode Island House of Representatives Dear members, I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 5264 and 5676 currently under consideration. As a resident of Rhode Island, I am deeply concerned about the potential consequences of this proposed legislation and its impact on our community.

Rent control, while often implemented with good intentions to address housing affordability issues, can have several detrimental effects:

1. **Reduced Housing Supply:** Rent control can discourage property owners from investing in or maintaining rental properties. If landlords are unable to increase rents to cover maintenance costs or generate a reasonable return on their investment, they may choose to convert rental units to other uses, sell properties, or simply neglect maintenance, leading to a decrease in the overall supply of rental housing.
2. **Quality Decline:** With limited incentives to maintain or improve rental properties, landlords may neglect repairs and upgrades, leading to a decline in the quality of housing available to renters. This can result in deteriorating living conditions, including issues with sanitation, safety, and overall livability.
3. **Market Distortion:** Rent control can distort housing markets by creating artificial price ceilings that do not accurately reflect the true market demand and supply dynamics. This can lead to shortages, as landlords may be less inclined to offer rental units at below-market rates, exacerbating the problem of housing scarcity.
4. **Inefficiency and Allocation Issues:** Rent-controlled units may not always be allocated efficiently, as tenants may have little incentive to move out of their current units even if their housing needs change. This can result in underutilization of space and misallocation of housing resources, with some tenants occupying units that may be too large or too small for their needs.
5. **Disincentive for New Construction:** Rent control can discourage developers from building new rental housing, particularly in areas where rent control policies are in place. Developers may perceive the potential returns on new construction projects as too low or risky due to rent control regulations, further exacerbating housing shortages in high-demand areas.

Overall, while rent control may provide short-term relief for some renters facing high housing costs, its long-term consequences often include reduced housing supply, deteriorating housing quality, market distortions, and disincentives for investment and construction in the rental housing sector. Alternative approaches to address housing affordability, such as increasing housing supply through zoning reforms, subsidies for low-income renters, or targeted tax incentives, may offer more sustainable solutions without the negative side effects associated with rent control.

Sincerely,
Jeremy Booth

Rhode Island should not pass rent control because it would reduce the supply of rental housing, discourage new construction, and lead to deteriorating property conditions. Studies from San Francisco (Diamond et al., 2019) and Cambridge, MA (Autor et al., 2014) show that rent control causes landlords to convert rental units into condos, shrinking the housing supply and making rents higher for new tenants. In New York City, rent-controlled apartments remain

occupied by long-term tenants, even when their housing needs change, leading to inefficient use of space and worsening shortages. Sweden's rent control system has resulted in decades-long waiting lists for apartments, proving that strict price caps do not guarantee availability. A 2012 survey of economists by the University of Chicago found that 93% agreed rent control reduces housing supply and quality. Instead of rent control, Rhode Island should focus on zoning reform, tax incentives for affordable housing development, and tenant assistance programs to improve affordability without driving landlords out of the rental market.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Booth
21 Murphy Cir
Middletown, RI 02842
jeremybooth@cox.net