

Dawn Huntley

From: Amy Pavia <amy@seaflowerproperty.com>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2025 2:13 PM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Subject: OPPOSED RENT CONTROL H5954 PROVIDENCE RENT CONTROL & JUST CAUSE

Dear Committee clerk Huntley,

I am writing to strongly oppose H5954.

While I understand the intent behind this bill is to protect tenants and address housing affordability, the proposed measures would ultimately have the opposite effect—discouraging housing investment, reducing rental housing quality, and straining relationships between landlords and tenants.

H5954 includes several problematic provisions:

Rent Control: History and studies across the country show that rent control discourages new development and disincentivizes upkeep of existing units. This leads to housing shortages and deteriorating conditions—not affordability.

Just Cause Eviction: Property owners should retain the right to non-renew leases at the end of their terms. This bill would tie landlords' hands, making it harder to manage properties or address problematic situations.

Rental Registry and Permit Restrictions: These create layers of red tape and delay necessary improvements. Denying building permits due to minor or unrelated violations punishes proactive landlords and slows housing progress.

Tenant Payment Escrow: Allowing tenants to withhold rent without judicial oversight invites abuse and undermines property owners' rights and income stability.

Relocation Fees: Forcing landlords to pay substantial fees to regain use of their own property—whether for renovation, sale, or family use—is unfair and could prevent housing reinvestment or family housing transitions.

Unelected Regulatory Board: Empowering a city board to create and enforce these sweeping rules, without safeguards against bias or lack of experience, opens the door to inconsistent or politically motivated decision-making.

As Rhode Island's capital city, Providence should lead by example—encouraging investment, smart development, and balanced landlord-tenant laws. But this bill sets a dangerous precedent that could ripple throughout the state, hurting everyone involved in the housing ecosystem.

Please support real solutions like streamlining permitting, incentivizing construction, and expanding access to legal aid—not punitive, ineffective policies that make it harder for good landlords to offer housing.

I urge you to vote NO on H5954.

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

Rent Control OR "stabilization" Concerns:

Rent control often results in negative consequences, including reduced investment in housing stock, deterioration of rental properties, and decreased availability of affordable housing in the long term. By artificially capping rental rates, landlords may lack incentives or resources to maintain and improve their properties, ultimately harming tenants and exacerbating housing quality issues.

Just Cause Evictions:

Just Cause gives tenants an interest in a property owner's rights. Requiring just cause evictions could impede landlords' ability to manage properties efficiently and address problematic tenancies. Landlords require flexibility to respond to various circumstances, particularly in multifamily homes where disruptive tenants may affect others. Mandating just cause evictions restricts landlords' ability to remove problematic tenants, potentially increasing tensions within rental communities. Contracts must remain negotiable and flexible for all parties.

Mandated Landlord-Tenant Relations for Housing Violations:

Mandating landlord-tenant relations in cases of housing violations could burden landlords with additional bureaucratic requirements and legal liabilities, discouraging property ownership and investment in rental housing. Instead of implementing blanket measures like rent control and mandatory just cause evictions, I urge policymakers to consider alternative approaches that promote housing affordability and tenant protections without stifling housing market dynamics or infringing on property rights. Solutions such as increasing housing supply through streamlined permitting processes, providing financial incentives for affordable housing development, and enhancing tenant education and support services could offer more effective and sustainable outcomes.

The only solution to our housing troubles is creating more supply so that competition increases and prices stop increasing. Since we know that Just Cause Eviction & Rent Control Policies deter building, it does not make sense to enact these policies. We must not remove red tape and stick it somewhere else!

Sincerely,

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