



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

April 2, 2023

The Honorable Steve Casey  
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI, 02903

Dear Chairman Casey and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I write this letter in strong opposition to House Bill 5954, *AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY – RENT CONTROL IN THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE*. If passed, this legislation would allow the City of Providence to adopt rent control ordinances, subject to certain exemptions.

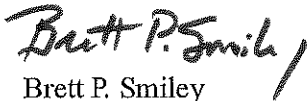
Providence, like the State of Rhode Island, is facing a housing crisis. As Mayor, I fully recognize the challenges that rising rents pose to our residents, and I am committed to implementing meaningful solutions to address this issue.

Currently, 37 states prohibit municipalities from imposing rent control at the city or town level. Rent control has been shown to reduce both the quantity and quality of available housing by discouraging investment in rental properties. Over time, this leads to deferred maintenance and the deterioration of rental units. Furthermore, rent control ultimately harms tenants by reducing their access to safe, well-maintained housing while distorting the housing market.

The primary driver of rising rents in Providence is the lack of housing supply. Rent control will do nothing to address this fundamental issue; rather, it will discourage the development of new housing. As Mayor, I am committed to expanding the availability of affordable and middle-income housing—an approach that represents the only real, long-term solution to our rental affordability crisis.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to reject House Bill 5954.

Sincerely,

  
Brett P. Smiley  
Mayor