

**Pinette, Susan**

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**From:** scott.lawliss@fullsailproperties.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023 10:45 AM  
**To:** Williams, Lynne; Grohoski, Nicole; Baldacci, Joe; Curry, Chip; Carney, Anne; Lyford, Peter; Haggan, David; JUD  
**Cc:** 'Sandra Blackmer'; 'Bruce Blackmer'; 'Sandra Blackmer'; 'Donna Hodges'; dan@bernierlawoffice.com; 'Buster Leen'; 'Scott Thomas'; 'Tim Pellett'  
**Subject:** Legislative Onslaught on Maine's Landlords

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

Dear Senators and Representative,

My name is Scott Lawliss. I live in Mt Desert and own apartment buildings in Bangor, Brewer and Winterport. I am also President of GBAOMA or the Greater Bangor Apartment Owners and Managers Association.

Maine has had a housing crises over the past several years. Rents are rising and there is a shortage of housing units. It is a very difficult problem and it will take time resolve. It is a product of many things primarily stemming our nations response to COVID and the subsequent inflation that it caused. It was not caused Maine's landlords or the set of laws that has traditionally governed them. Yet the Legislature, and specifically the judiciary committee, is responding with a set of proposed laws that will aggravate the problem. We are in strong opposition to LD 557, LD 558, LD 691, LD 701, LD 804, LD 679. Taken together, along with other proposed laws may be coming, this is a legislative onslaught.

Overregulating us will stifle the development of new housing and will take units off the market as smaller landlords will be intimidated out of the business. Typically, many of Maine's landlords are small "mom and pop" business who own only few units that they bought or inherited and are kept as part of their retirement plan. These people tend be more flexible and willing to house people with blemishes on their applications. If the business ends up being too hard to run they will sell to larger landlords who have staff and tend to be much more careful, have more rules and raise rent more regularly.

The impetus behind this wave of legislation seems to be to help with homelessness. I think that is misguided. Hurting landlords will not help tenants. We house hundreds of thousands of Maine's residents. We are a huge part of the solution to the homeless problem. If we are allowed to run our businesses in an efficient way rents will be fair and we will create more units. I would also argue that we will be much more likely to take a chance on a tenant who has an eviction, bankruptcy, or felony in their background if we are not punished too badly for those tenants who don't work out. Personally, I have signed leases with many tenants that have all these issues in their applications and for the most they have proved to be good tenants for me. Much of the homeless problem stems from drug addiction and mental illness. These are age old societal problems. In most cases the typical small, Maine landlord is not equipped to deal with these problems.

Finally, I would like to argue on behalf of the responsible Maine tenant of all income levels. These people want safe and affordable housing and that is what we, as landlords, strive to provide. Maine already has some of the most tenant friendly laws in the country. I say we continue with the laws that we have traditionally been governed by and allow us to work towards building up the housing stock. More housing is ultimately the only solution for less homelessness. One positive byproduct of higher rents will be more development.

Thank you for your consideration.

Scott Lawliss