

Brit Vitalius
Portland
LD 1710

I am strongly opposed to LD 1710. Attempting to force 10% of an owner's private rental units into some version of low income housing is legally questionable, logistically unenforceable, and simply the wrong way to engage housing providers in the solutions to our housing challenge.

Rent Control in Portland has been a failure and the cause of more rental increases in Portland since before its passage. I never raised rents in my units before rent control. Unfortunately, I am now forced to raise every unit every year because of rent control restrictions.

You should expect LD 1710 would have a similar effect. If 10% of units are forced to be below market rate, then the other 90% will be higher than they are today to compensate.

A proposal this dramatic should:

- a) be rejected out of hand on the grounds of basic property rights
- b) considered much more thoroughly both in terms of consequences and legality
- c) considered in the context of the ultimate need for more housing development - this type of restriction will discourage more housing development, which is the thing we need most.

I have been the President of the Southern Maine Landlord Association (now the Rental Housing Alliance) for more than 15 years, representing hundreds of rental housing providers and 100's of units during that time. I am also a founding member of the Quality Housing Coalition (QHC), which engages landlords to voluntarily accept at-risk tenants through our Project HOME program. In 2022, we housed 250 families in private, market rate units.

This type of solution is both positive and effective. Maine has good rental housing providers - treating them that way will get more good housing providers and more good housing; treating them like they are the problem will get more housing problems.

Brit Vitalius
President, Rental Housing Alliance of Southern Maine