

Blum, Alyster

From: Ara Kemezys <ara.kemezys@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 24, 2025 10:59 AM
To: Cmte HED
Subject: A Maine Landlord asking for the Committee to Vote Ought Not To Pass on LD 1534

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This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Dear Members of the Housing Committee

My Name is Ara Kemezys and I am a landlord in the State of Maine and I am asking you to vote ought not to pass on LD 1534 "An Act Enabling Municipalities to Protect Tenants and Stabilize Rents".

This bill will make my job as a landlord much more difficult by limiting my pricing options and interfering the natural supply vs demand pricing dynamics. I will also be limited on my eviction options whenever I have a tenant that is causing problems within one of my houses that negatively impact my other tenants or nearby residents.

The components of a rental price is energy, labor, materials, garbage disposal, water service and other utilities, of which we have no control over while being forced to cap our prices in this bill. Over the past few years, our business costs have risen above the 5% rent increase cap proposed in this bill. The cost of energy has gone up significantly over the past 5 years, especially heating oil which most of my tenants use. If a landlord provides heat for the tenants and if we have a large price fluctuation to the upside, this could make a heated rental unit unprofitable along with other costs of services that are provided in a rental unit.

If our rent prices will be capped and increases limited, I think it would be fair to argue for a property tax cap to protect homeowners, and ask the question would the towns be willing to give rental properties a tax break?

I own rental units in a couple of towns in Maine, at the moment I only need to memorize one set of rules for the whole state, if this bill passes I would have to work with several sets of rules between each town that I own property in, making the business more difficult and expensive. Real estate attorneys would also have to become proficient with all of the varying rules within all of the towns they serve to properly represent their clients, which would in turn raise the housing costs for everybody involved.

If the State of Maine wants to help solve the housing affordability problem, we need to reduce regulations and streamline the permitting process to encourage more housing developments. We need more efficient government to attract and keep entrepreneurs like myself so the demand vs supply equation can correct itself.

If I no longer have control on what I can charge for my property and all of the costs associated with providing a housing unit, I have to ask myself is this worth the increased risk to provide rental housing? This bill might stabilize rent prices for the short term, in the long term there will be fewer rental units entering the market with fewer landlords like myself deciding to take on the additional risks with the imposed 5% rental price increase caps and patchwork regulations throughout the state.

There are solutions to this problem, but this bill is not one of them, that is why I am urging the members of the housing committee to Vote Ought Not To Pass on LD 1534.

Thank You.