

Justin Giroux
Fairfield
LD 824

Dear Housing Committee,

Please oppose LD 824 - An Act Regarding Pet Fees in Rental Housing.

If this bill passes, the consequence will be simple: we will stop accepting new pets, and we will be forced to end pet agreements with existing tenants as leases come up for renewal. The responsibility for limiting pet-friendly housing in Maine will lie squarely with those who voted in favor of this bill.

Most of our tenants are happy to find a unit that even accepts pets and are okay with paying a reasonable monthly pet fee for this privilege. Passing this bill takes away their options and limits the availability of pet-friendly housing in our community.

Let's be clear about the financial realities. The proposed cap on pet rent at 1% of the monthly rent is simply unacceptable. It does not even begin to cover the real costs associated with allowing pets. We see it all – scratched floors, mini blinds broken by curious dogs and climbing cats, window trim clawed by dogs, the lingering smell of cat/rabbit urine in the basement, and the sheer amount of hair everywhere during turnover, even from the most responsible pet owners, and yellow lawns. Why would we deal with this added wear and tear and the associated costs for a mere 1% of the rent, which in many cases amounts to only a few extra dollars a month? It's not profitable to take pets under these new restrictions.

Additionally, service animals and ESA animals are already free under the law because they are not legally pets, but medical devices so that part of this bill is redundant.

Please stop targeting small housing providers like us. We work diligently on our buildings and strive to provide quality housing. It's hard work to care for and improve our housing stock. Many landlords are already selling their properties to larger corporations due to the increasing burden of legislation like this from Augusta, which creates an endless maze of red tape and makes it unsustainable for "mom and pop" landlords.

Regards,
Justin Giroux
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