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I have been a landlord in Portland on Munjoy Hill since 1999. I live in my building and rent out the other three apartments. Although my rents have subsidized my finances, I have always had to maintain a full time job, and whatever money I have been able to save or put aside, has gone right back into my building -- the idea being that one day my rents would afford for me a retirement. I am now 62, and still work.

It is frustrating that as hard as I try to be fair , generous and respectful of my tenants and maintain affordable rents, I am hamstrung by what I can and cannot do and charge. I can't think of any other "business" that is regulated due to circumstances so beyond our control and our responsibility. We did not create the housing shortage or inflation, and yet the burden of solving these issues too often falls on us. Not hotels, not homeowners, not developers and municipalities... but landlords. In twenty-six years, I have watched my property taxes increase from \$1,600 to now over \$12,000. I am told to expect another 15% next year. I have watched my fees for city services that once were free skyrocket. And, like everybody else, my own expenses skyrocketed. Meanwhile, my rents have not kept pace with the increases, nor can they.

There are several issues here. For starters, there is no incentive to charge below market value. I used to lock tenants into whatever rent they were paying when they moved in with occasional small increases. A lot of landlords do this. You get to know your tenant, you like them, you care about them, you give them a break. No longer. You can't do this anymore. If so, you are permanently locking yourself into a rental price that is crippling long term. It used to be, after a tenant moved out, I would renovate and then figure out what my return on investment should be spread out over how many years. So if I spent \$15,000 renovating, I would calculate a break even in maybe two or three years. No longer. You can't do that anymore because even if you renovate, you can't raise your rents to cover cost.

It makes me ask, "Why even be a landlord?" What is the point of this? Why not just condo and get out of this business?

Why should I be punished for having invested in what once was a poor, run down neighborhood, built it up by my own labor and money, and now, when I have a bad back and shoulder, can not enjoy the fruits of my labor because I am somehow the problem?

The irony is, I regard myself as a progressive liberal. And yet, when I talk to these rent-control people, I am amazed at A) their hostility B) their inability to see any nuance and differentiate between small, live-in landlords like me who are just trying to be fair and responsible from the Medieval feudalists they seem to regard us as. I know so many landlords who just want to get out of this business. How is this beneficial to Portland or Maine? Do we seriously want to go back to the 1980's? because I lived it, and I remember what all that "affordable" housing looked like.

Going after landlords AGAIN is not the solution. I urge you to take a broader view of these complicated issues than simply passing the buck onto Landlords. Thank you