

David Roberts
Portland
LD 1534

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to LD 1534.

While I understand the desire to support tenants and address housing affordability, this bill would ultimately do more harm than good—particularly to small landlords, renters, and the broader housing market in Maine.

Allowing individual municipalities to set their own rules around rent control and evictions undermines the consistency and predictability that both landlords and tenants rely on. Small housing providers—many of whom manage just one or two properties—simply don't have the legal and financial resources to navigate a patchwork of local laws. Adding annual reporting requirements and empowering towns to create new eviction rules only adds to the complexity, increasing costs and legal exposure for those trying to provide safe, quality housing.

The consequences of rent control are well documented. In cities like Portland that have implemented similar policies, property values for multi-unit buildings have dropped substantially. That devalues an owner's investment, reduces property tax revenue, and shifts the burden to homeowners who are already stretched thin—especially seniors and working families.

Additionally, these policies discourage the development of new rental housing, which is exactly what Maine needs to address the current housing shortage. If the regulatory environment becomes too risky or unpredictable, many small landlords will choose to sell or leave the market entirely, further reducing available housing.

What's more, we're already seeing natural stabilization in the rental market. Many landlords are lowering rents and experiencing longer vacancy periods. Rent control doesn't just interfere with that balance—it can freeze tenants in place and reduce mobility, making it harder for families, workers, and newcomers to find homes.

LD 1534 may be well-meaning, but its impacts would be broad and deeply negative. It threatens housing availability, puts small landlords at risk, and creates an uneven and unpredictable regulatory landscape. I urge you to vote against this bill.

Sincerely,
David Roberts