

# COMMUNITIES THRIVE WITH RENT CONTROL:

A Guide for California Cities

2017 Edition



**TENANTS  
TOGETHER**

California's  
Statewide Organization  
for Renters' Rights







Photo: Mountain View Tenants Coalition

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## **WARNING: HANDLE RENT CONTROL WITH CARE**

Prepare for serious opposition. Sound political strategy and coordination with allies required. A weak rent control law sets a bad precedent and can do more harm than good to tenants and our movement. Don't go it alone.





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### Note on the 2017 edition:

This is the second edition of our toolkit, the first was released in 2015 after the initial passage of rent control in Richmond, California. Many ideas in our first toolkit were further put to the test in rent control campaigns in 2016 including but not limited to city of Alameda, Mountain View, San Mateo, and Santa Rosa. We have refined our ideas to reflect some lessons learned in these campaigns and are proud to work to support grassroots movements for renter protections.

### You Need Help

We value grassroots tenant power and self-determination. It's important that a campaign fit the needs of a community and draws on community resources, but there's no need to recreate the wheel. That's why we made this toolkit as a collection of ideas and strategies that have worked in many different places to organize for rent control and just cause—from Merced, to Richmond, to Mountain View, to Ridgecrest—that you can adapt for your own.

**Tenants Together helps form, support, unite, and build the power of local tenant groups across California rooted in principles of social, economic, and racial justice.** Strong tenant associations and tenant unions -- led by members of the impacted community -- are cornerstones in the fight for housing justice.

**We invite tenant organizations in California to join Tenants Together as member organizations.** For member organizations interested in mounting a rent control campaign, we can provide the following:

- Legal advice or referral on drafting legislation;
- Communications support including developing talking points, traditional and social media training;
- Organizing advice and trainings on strategies for a rent control campaign, formation of city-wide and building-wide tenants unions, and direct action tactics like rent strikes or collective bargaining.

We are also available on a limited basis to other kinds of groups and coalitions.

### Reach out to:

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Photo: Kristopher Skinner/Bay Area News Group

## INTRODUCTION — ROOTS OF THE HOUSING CRISIS

California is in a state of emergency. Unchecked rent increases and unjust evictions are putting people into the streets. Skyrocketing rents are described as an unfortunate but unfixable in the near-term, and that the only solution is to deregulate building construction to add market supply. This is Reaganomics for housing policy, a supply-side theory that has failed and will fail to house the majority of us, but will line the pockets of landlords and developers. There IS an alternative.

The real-estate and landlord industries characterize the protection of existing residents through rent control or the development of new housing supply as an either/or proposition. This is a false choice. **Rent control is effective at keeping people in their homes.** It can be pursued alongside any number of policies regarding housing supply. We propose an alternative: keep people in their homes now, push for long-term policies to bring down the costs of land and housing, and build the low-income housing supply we need. In this toolkit, we dive into an exploration of rent control.

Why are rents rising? An [analysis by Zumper isolated venture capital](#) as having the most direct effect on rising rents. Landlords try to make as much money as they can by evicting tenants and gouging rent when there is an astronomical amount of money in a community. [We've seen it happen across the country, from North Dakota to Silicon Valley.](#) As well, international capital is also flowing in to big cities globally, as the wealthy park their money in real-estate investments. Rents are rising because homes are being treated as commodities for profit, not dwellings for people. **The speculation on land and housing is driving our housing crisis.**

Supply-side economics does not fully explain the crisis. A focus on “just build” ignores our recent history. In California, we had a construction boom in the 2000s. Flipping houses was trendy. Banks pushed sub-prime mortgages onto people of color and working class communities, then later foreclosed on those homes and those assets. We let a firesale to banks and investment companies happen, rather than cities themselves investing in infrastructure for affordable homes. Now the biggest



owner of single-family home rentals in California is not mom-and-pop landlords but corporations like Blackstone-Invitation Homes, Colony Financial, and Waypoint Homes. We have been building, but communities haven't had control over what we build, who we build for, and who profits off building. Low-income communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by this imbalance of power.

This transfer of wealth from tenants and homeowners to big corporations comes after decades of federal divestment from affordable housing. Section 8 vouchers replaced public housing, pushing public subsidies into the private market. These subsidies have been slashed by millions over the years and now Section 8 can barely keep up to market rents, with eligible tenants on endless waiting lists. Landlords regularly discriminate against Section 8 tenants, and the program has largely been a failure at giving low-income tenants greater choice of where to live.

As the government gets out of the housing business, corporations have stepped in. The main architects for pushing market supply-side economics as the solution to the housing crisis in our state is the California Apartment Association (CAA), which regularly mischaracterizes rent control because they have a profit motive to undermine tenant protections and conduct their business without regulations on rents and evictions. Likewise, the California Association of Realtors has led efforts to weaken tenant protections all as part of their effort to maximize property values and their commissions.

A supply-side economics solution is unproven and simply adds to the coffers of corporate landlords without addressing displacement. In May of 2016, the Urban Displacement Project through UC Berkeley and UCLA examined the trickle-down housing claim that producing more market rate housing would eventually produce affordable homes as those units age and new units are built, also known as "filtering," and found nothing to substantiate this claim.

The rental housing bubble will eventually burst, but our greatest asset will be gone: people. Cities are bleeding out the diversity of residents that live in them now and contribute to the culture, art, music, and vibrancy that has drawn business and jobs here.

***We need solutions right now to keep people in their homes, and rent control and just cause policies are the best way to stem the tide of gentrification and displacement that is ripping apart the social fabric of California.***

Rent control will slow evictions that threaten to unravel our society. The price of eviction is paid in the [health of tenants](#), disproportionately black and brown families with children who are regularly uprooted from their homes. The Alameda County Public Health Department [declared the high cost of housing to be a public health crisis](#). Stabilizing rents will provide a window to plan, build affordable homes, and reinvest in public infrastructure.

Pursue a host of affordable housing supply solutions. Inclusionary zoning is an effective way for developers and communities to meet some needs, but this is not a complete way to catch up on the lack of deeply affordable housing supply. The crisis has deepened as the federal government has divested from housing. There is no new public housing being built. Funding for the new construction of non-profit affordable housing has been gutted. Housing should be considered public infrastructure and historically one of the best market interventions has been heavy public investment.

No one who advocates for rent control believes it to be a silver bullet to the housing crisis, but it is a lifeline for our communities. The most vulnerable populations: seniors and disabled people on fixed incomes, young people, and communities of color, benefit from rent control because they are the most affected by rent gouging and evictions by speculators. Those who do not support rent control and only support adding market-rate supply do not value those that already live here and the most vulnerable among us.

Rent control is just part of the solution to the housing crisis, but we will never solve the crisis without it.

In solidarity,

Aimee Inglis  
Associate Director, Tenants Together









# 10 FACTS ABOUT RENT CONTROL IN CALIFORNIA

**1. Rent control laws limit annual rent increases.**

Without rent control, landlords are free to raise rents in any amount as often as they want.

**2. Rent control promotes stability.**

Tenants stay in their homes longer and are more invested in their local neighborhoods and communities. Preserves diversity. Prevents homelessness.

**3. Rent control leaves tenants with more money to spend in the local economy.**

Tenants who spend less on rent spend more in their communities. Additional money in the pocket of low- and middle- income people is disproportionately spent rather than saved.

**4. Rent control does not protect tenants who fail to pay the rent or violate their lease from eviction.**

State law allows eviction of tenants that don't pay rent or who violate their leases, and no local rent control law can change that. Tenants can also be evicted if the owner wants to move in.

**5. Rent control does not stop development of new housing.**

Cities with rent control are experiencing some of the highest per capita construction rates in the state.

**6. NINETEEN CITIES IN CALIFORNIA HAVE SOME FORM OF RENT CONTROL OR JUST CAUSE FOR EVICTION PROTECTIONS:**

*Berkeley, Beverly Hills, East Palo Alto, Emeryville, Glendale, Hayward, Los Angeles, Maywood, Mountain View, Oakland, Palm Springs, Richmond, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Monica, San Jose, Thousand Oaks, Union City, and West Hollywood.*

**7. Rent control laws are popular with voters.**

California voters defeated the last statewide landlord attack on rent control by a decisive 22 point margin statewide. (Proposition 98, 2008.)

**8. Landlords do just fine under rent control.**

All rent control laws are required to allow landlords to earn a "fair return" on their investment. Landlords can raise the rent every year by a set percentage and pass through certain additional costs. In theory, landlords can challenge rent control laws if they are denied a fair return, but in practice that doesn't happen because landlords do well under rent control.

**9. Rent control is usually cost neutral for cities.**

Any costs to administer the program can come through a low per unit fee paid by landlords (or shared with tenants).

**10. Rent control is perfectly legal.**

Courts have upheld rent control laws for over four decades.



## MAKING THE CASE FOR RENT CONTROL

It's time to set the record straight about rent control and its proven role as a solution to stabilize local housing markets and avoid mass displacement. Unless you think landlords should be able to raise rents however much they want, whenever they want, you believe in rent control.

**Modern rent control does not permanently freeze rents.** Rent stabilization establishes reasonable annual increases. Rent Control means that landlords cannot raise rents more than a small, reasonable percentage each year, based on a percentage of Consumer Price Index/inflation. Rent control and just cause for eviction protections work best together. Just cause for eviction means landlords would have to give a reason for evicting tenants, and would have to pay relocation costs for reasons where the

tenant is not at fault.

Without these protections, landlords are free to raise rents in any amount and evict good tenants for no reason at all. Just cause for eviction and rent control ordinances have a proven track record in 19 California cities, including Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco and East Palo Alto, to protect countless low income tenants from displacement.

As Richard Arnott writes in "Time for Revisionism on Rent Control," rent stabilization like we have in California prevents rent-gouging and displacement and allows for a fair return on investments. The only law that imposed rent ceilings existed in New York City before 1970, which has since been overhauled. Misinformation about modern rent control stems from economists' views on rent ceilings.





Photo: Los Angeles Tenants Union

***Tenants seek to reside in our homes without fear of displacement. 46% of the residents in California are tenants. We raise our families here, send our kids to school, pay our taxes, vote, and contribute to our community.***

However, we are often ignored in policy discussions about housing. Landlords and realtors have dominated the discussion for years with scare tactics and false information about rent control protections. Meanwhile, they are profiting from unlimited rent hikes and displacement. Landlords try to scare the public about rent control with bogus talking points. They regularly argue that rent control will inhibit new development, but cities with rent control in California have some of the most new developments in the state. They argue that rent control is costly, but fail to note that rent control is ultimately cost neutral for cities because the programs are funded through a per unit fee on landlords. They argue that “just cause for eviction laws” stop the eviction of tenants who violate their obligations, despite the fact that every rent control law allows eviction for

nonpayment of rent or tenant misconduct. Put simply, the landlord propaganda against rent control has no merit.

**Rent control doesn't make rents rise, that's like blaming a fire on the presence of a firefighter.**

Rents rise for many reasons—rent control is not one of them. Eric Fischer's recent analysis of San Francisco rents from 1950 to present day found that [rent control did not increase rent overall](#), and did not distort the rental market. In Boston, [a study](#) showed that when rent control was eliminated in Cambridge, costs of all housing -- formerly rent controlled and uncontrolled units -- rose dramatically.

It makes sense that expensive cities are the ones that pass rent control – these regulations get considered, passed and retained in response to high prices. When modern rent control laws were first passed in California, they were passed in response to landlords raising prices in response to inflation in 1970s and not lowering them even after the state passed a law giving tax relief to property owners through Prop 13.



Modern rent control does not impact new housing. In 2011, a [study of Winnipeg rent controls](#) found that more housing was built after rent control was enacted. Accordingly, the boom and bust cycles of local housing construction are driven by the overall health of the economy, not rent control.

**Rent control does not affect quality & quantity of housing.** A study by urban planner John Gilderbloom showed that [modern rent control laws in 100 U.S. cities](#) have not negatively impacted the quality and quantity of rental units and actually motivated landlords to increase maintenance of rental housing. By law, landlords must comply with code requirements for rental housing and the extent of enforcement is the primary determinant of the quality of the housing stock.

**Rent control is good for local economies.** Rent control helps renters keep more disposable cash in their pockets to support local economies. Rent control is not about putting landlords out of business. It's about fairness, and allowing landlords a reasonable return while giving tenants the peace of mind that they can budget for reasonable yearly rent increases.

**Rent control can be adopted with little or no cost to cities.** In fact, communities with rent control fund administrative costs through a small per unit fee paid by landlords.

Why not just build-baby-build instead? Trickle-down housing policies don't work. [Co Star, a real estate research firm, reported](#) that of 370,000 multi-family rental units completed from 2012 to 2014 in 54 metropolitan areas, 82% were considered "luxury." Luxury housing is the new "market-rate." Building housing for high-income people attracts more high income people, rather than lowering prices to levels affordable to low and moderate income people. In a gentrifying market, demand typically far outpaces what can realistically be built. High-income renters don't just go for newer units, they demand older units too, and are able to outbid lower-income tenants. Many cities without rent control are seeing higher rents on older units and new units are unaffordable.

**The "supply problem" message has successfully allowed some of the leading drivers of our housing crisis to evade blame: the rise of Wall Street's new rental empire.** In recent years, foreclosed homes have been snapped up in bulk by real estate

speculators and corporate landlords who turn them into rentals. The biggest owners of single-family home rentals in California are no longer mom-and-pop landlords, but mega Wall Street corporations like Blackstone and Colony Starwood.

Rent control doesn't "work" like it should because it is undermined by state laws like the Ellis Act and Costa Hawkins Act. Our hands are tied by the state to implement strong rent control. Landlords have pushed to deregulate rent control so it is less effective, then they point to how rent control should be banned because it "doesn't work." Like the deregulation of other social welfare programs, they work to limit and undermine broad support for progressive policy.

Through Ellis Act evictions, thousands of rent-controlled units have been taken off the market and converted to condos. The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act prevents rent control from protecting condos, single-family homes, rentals built after 1995, and allows landlords to charge market rate for new tenants (called vacancy decontrol).

The Harvard Law Review singled out vacancy decontrol as a reason for landlords to harass current rent-controlled tenants in order to make more money on new tenancies. In 2000, the journal of the American Planning Association cited vacancy control as essential to preventing displacement. Through Costa Hawkins, vacancy control is banned in California.

***Housing is not just any consumer good; it is necessity of life, and rents should be regulated for the public good.***

It should be treated like any other public good like food, water, and air. The choice about rent control is clear: help corporate landlords push people to the streets with unfettered rent increases, or help communities protect the greatest cultural and economic asset cities have: their people. Rent control is an essential policy to prevent the displacement of community members who live here now while we seek long-term solutions to reign in the cost of land and housing.





Tenants in the city of Alameda at 470 Central fight to stop their evictions

# RENT CONTROL 101

## What is rent control?

Without rent control, a landlord in California can generally raise rent in any amount or evict tenants for no reason after the lease term is up. Rent control limits rent increases and provides greater housing stability.

Rent control is when the government regulates the rent that may be charged for a privately owned residence. Rent control ordinances in California allow landlords to set the initial rent in any amount, but limit rent increases after a tenancy begins. A stronger system of rent control would regulate the initial rent of the tenancy, but that is currently not permitted under California state law.

Rent control is often combined with eviction protections, known as “just cause for eviction,” to make sure that landlords do not get around the rent increase limits by simply evicting tenants arbitrarily and bringing in new tenants.

## California’s history with rent control

The first controls in California on rent came during the Great Depression. The federal government instituted price controls, including controls on rent, and California was one of many states to have rent

control.

The second round of rent control came in the 1970s and 1980s. Proposition 13, a state law passed by voters in 1978, substantially lowered property taxes and had been presented to tenants as a way to lower rents through landlords having fewer expenses. However, rents remained high after Proposition 13’s passage, so many communities in California passed rent control laws within the next few years to directly address the issue of high rents.

## How did cities get rent control?

Rent control may be introduced through voter initiative or ballot measure, where an ordinance may be put to vote by the public after enough signatures are gathered on a petition for the ordinance. Cities that used this method include Santa Monica (1979), East Palo Alto (1986, 2010), Berkeley (1980), and Mountain View (2016).

Rent control may be passed through city council, where a majority of city council members vote to pass an ordinance. Cities that used this method include Beverly Hills (1978), Los Angeles (1978), Hayward (1979), San Francisco (1979), San Jose (1979), West Hollywood (1985), and Richmond (2015).





## What kind of housing can be protected?

In California, there are specific exemptions to rent control mandated by the state Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act law which was passed in 1995. Rent control does not apply to the following:

1. Single family homes, condominiums, and other properties where one unit is separately owned.
2. Housing built after February 1995.
3. Housing that was exempt from a local rent control ordinance when Costa Hawkins was adopted cannot later be rent controlled. For example, in San Francisco, because buildings built after 1979 were exempt from rent control at the time Costa Hawkins passed, San Francisco cannot put rent control on buildings built later than 1979. In contrast, if a rent control ordinance were passed today in Richmond (for example) where there has never been rent control, all units built before Feb. 1, 1995 could be covered.

The initial rent in most cases. In California, rent controls are limited to in-place tenancies. This means that while someone occupies a unit, their rent increases may be limited, but once a tenant moves, with limited exceptions, the landlord can increase the rent asked of a new tenant to any amount. This is called “vacancy decontrol” and is the law in Cali-

fornia due to the previously mentioned Costa-Hawkins Act. Before this state law was passed, Berkeley, East Palo Alto, Santa Monica, and West Hollywood had rent control ordinances where the rent could only be increased by a limited amount when a unit changed tenants (vacancy control).

In addition, government owned or subsidized units are generally exempt from rent increase limits because there are other rent regulations that control the rents.

## Annual Limits on Rent Increases

Most communities base the annual allowable increases in rent on the general increase in prices of goods and services in the area (inflation). These prices are calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a federal government agency, and are called the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The allowed rent increases are usually a percentage of the increase in CPI. For example, San Francisco allows annual rent increases of up to 60% of the increase in CPI for Urban Consumers in the Bay Area.

## Landlords have a right to a fair return

Landlords must be able to receive a “fair return” on their investment under a rent control law. This means that some kind of annual increase in rent is likely required. The question of fair return is de-





Photo: Fair and Affordable Santa Rosa

terminated with respect to an entire property, not a particular unit, and therefore few, if any, landlords in rent controlled cities are able to show that they are denied a fair return on their investment in the building as a whole.

Capital improvements – work on the property that increase its value (for example, new windows or a new roof – repair and maintenance doesn’t count) -- is another way that landlords can be allowed to raise rents over the generally allowed annual increase. The costs may be passed on to tenants through rent increases that spread the cost over a period of time.

For example, in San Francisco, for properties with 6 or more units, 50% of certified capital improvement costs can be passed through to tenants over 7 or 10 years, and that pass-through cannot exceed the greater of \$30 or 10% of a tenant’s base rent in any 12-month period. Some rent control laws have a hardship procedure to protect individual tenants who cannot afford to pay such pass-through charges.

## Hearings for Tenants

A tenant may be able to ask for a decrease in rent because of a reduction or loss of a housing service (ex. parking, laundry), code violations and other habitability problems.

## Rent Board

Cities with rent control usually have a designated group of people called a rent board to administer rent control ordinances. Rent board members can be elected by the public or appointed by a government official and may be volunteers or paid. Elected rent boards allow tenants to have a direct say in who is on the board. Berkeley and Santa Monica have elected rent boards. Cities with appointed rent boards include San Francisco, Oakland, East Palo Alto, Hayward, San Jose, West Hollywood and Los Angeles. The number of members range from 5 in San Francisco and 9 in Berkeley.

### *Administrative Staff*

Rent board staff may provide services such as housing counseling and arbitration of landlord-tenant disputes and also provide information such as current and historical annual allowed rent increases and information about eviction, or release a yearly report detailing the types of eviction notices filed with the department. Some cities, like Santa Monica, require all evictions to be reported to the Rent Board.

### *Funding*

Rent board costs are paid for by a per unit fee on landlords, which is often partially passed through to tenants, pays for rent board costs. For example, in West Hollywood, half of the fee may be passed



through to tenants in 12 monthly equal portions in addition to the rent.

**No cities in California with rent control pay for rent boards through their general fund.** These costs are covered entirely by fees paid by landlords and tenant pass-throughs.

## Just Cause for Eviction

“Just cause for eviction” protections are the requirement that landlords have a specific reason to evict a tenant. It is very difficult to demand or enforce your rights as a tenant where there is no just cause for eviction protection law because a landlord can simply evict a tenant without giving a reason.

Under a just cause for eviction protection law, landlords are allowed to evict tenants who do not pay rent, breach a lease agreement, or become a nuisance. Just cause laws also allow some evictions when the tenant has not done anything wrong (a “no fault” eviction). Two examples of no fault evictions are Owner Move In evictions and Ellis Act evictions.

1. Owner Move In is when the owner of the building wants a unit so they, or a relative, can move in
2. The Ellis Act is a state law passed in 1985 that allows a property owner to evict all tenants of a building to remove the property from the rental market.

Just cause goes hand in hand with rent control. Allowing a landlord to evict for no reason at all defeats the purpose of a rent control law to provide stability for tenants, prevent displacement, and promote affordability. That’s why nearly every rent control law also requires “just cause” for eviction. Of the California cities that have rent control, only one does not have just cause eviction protections (Los Gatos).

There are some cities that have just cause protection laws without rent control. Just cause policies

alone are valuable. They provide basic fairness and prevent retaliation, discrimination, and harassment proactively. These are Glendale, San Diego, Union City, city of Alameda, and Emeryville.

Unlike with rent control, all residential rentals can be protected under just cause, including single family homes, condominiums, and newly constructed units.

## Relocation Payments

Just cause for eviction laws often include relocation provisions. Landlords evicting for reasons other than tenant fault can be required to pay relocation payments. These payments can help protect against the financial burden of no fault evictions on the tenant. For example, San Francisco requires landlords to pay tenants who are evicted through the Ellis Act, owner move-ins, demolition/permanent removal of unit from housing use, temporary capital improvement work, or substantial rehabilitation. Those required payments can also be higher for elderly, disabled, or families with minor child in the household.

## Other protections that can be added to a rent control and just cause ordinance

### *Security deposit interest*

Landlords may be required to pay tenants interest on their security deposits (the initial payment to a landlord before a tenant moves in) while they are held by the landlord. For example, in Berkeley, landlords are required to make these payments every December in cash or as a rent rebate and to pay the balance upon the departure of a tenant.

### *Registration*

Landlords can be required to register their rental properties – that is, notify the city of the units that are rented. Rent boards can require landlords to provide information to their tenants such as annual allowable rent increases and a phone number to call for additional information.

*Photo: Los Angeles Tenants Union*





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**AL DESALOJO!**

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UNETE al Sindicato de Inquilinos de Los Angeles  
[www.facebook.com/latenantsunion](http://www.facebook.com/latenantsunion)





## LOCAL POLICIES THAT UNDERMINE RENT CONTROL PROTECTIONS

Landlords and real-estate speculators have used a number of strategies to displace tenants protected by rent control and make a higher profit.

### Owner Move-in

An owner move-in is when the owner of a building decides to occupy the unit they have been renting out to tenants or allow a close relative to occupy the unit. This type of eviction is one that is allowed in all cities with just cause eviction protections. It is sometimes abused by landlords who have no intent of moving into a unit but would like to vacate a unit in order to rent a unit at a higher rate, particularly in hot real estate markets. In 2017, San Francisco passed legislation to curb illegal owner move in evictions after a NBC news investigative report found 1 in 4 to be fraudulent.

### Demolition

Some owners seek to demolish rent controlled buildings in order to build condominiums that can be sold individually to buyers. This has been a common strategy by landlords in Los Angeles. Cities

can control demolition and condominium conversion to prevent abuse, and many jurisdictions have some controls in place to prevent conversion of rent controlled apartments.

### Buy Outs

Another way landlords have vacated rental units is through buy outs, or paying tenants to “voluntarily” leave. This way, the requirements of evictions can often be avoided. For instance, a unit emptied through a buyout can be re-rented at a much higher rate. Sometimes this is without threat of eviction but often times landlords offer tenants money to leave after telling them of their intent to evict for no-fault reasons such as those above. Due to the rise of such buy-outs, and the danger of abuse of tenants, Santa Monica and San Francisco have passed laws to require transparency and disclosure in buy out negotiation.





Photo: Committee to Protect Oakland Renters

## STATE POLICIES THAT LIMIT LOCAL RENT CONTROL

Landlords have been trying to abolish rent control in California for decades. While they have failed to abolish rent control, they have succeeded in passing state laws that significantly weaken rent control. These laws preempt certain local tenant protections. It is important for advocates to understand these state laws and what they do and do not limit cities from doing.

### The Ellis Act

Sponsored by the California Association of Realtors, the Ellis Act is a 1986 state law that allows landlords to remove units from the rental market and get out of the rental business. To use this, the landlord must remove the entire building from the rental market and evict all tenants simultaneously. These types of evictions generally require a notice of one year for senior and disabled tenants and at least 120 days for all other tenants. Landlords are legally restricted from re-renting units that have been vacated due to Ellis Act evictions. Ellis Act evictions are most often used to vacate the building of tenants and convert the units to other more lucra-

tive uses. The threat of an Ellis Act eviction has also been used to scare tenants into moving so that unit can be re-rented at a higher rate.

Unless and until the Ellis Act is repealed or reformed, any local rent control law is required to allow a landlord to perform a no-fault eviction using the Ellis Act. This is a major loophole around rent control that speculators regularly abuse to evict long-term tenants. The Ellis Act does allow cities to adopt certain limits and protections for such evictions (such as a one year eviction notice for senior or disabled tenants), and when crafting new rent control ordinance, advocates should insist that protections allowed under the Ellis Act are incorporated into local rent control laws.

**Remember, despite the landlords' never-ending claims that they have a constitutional right to evict to leave the rental business, they do not.** The California Supreme Court made this clear. Their right is statutory and was a policy decision by the legislature. The Ellis Act created the right and, if it were repealed, they will have no such right any longer.



## Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act

In 1995, the real estate industry passed the state Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act which imposed severe restrictions on rent control. Under Costa Hawkins, cities cannot apply rent control to the following:

1. Single family homes, condominiums, and other properties where one unit is separately owned.
2. Housing built after February 1995.
3. Housing that was exempt from a local rent control ordinance when Costa Hawkins was adopted cannot later be rent controlled. For example, in San Francisco, because buildings built after 1979 were exempt from rent control at the time Costa Hawkins passed, San Francisco cannot put rent control on buildings built later than 1979. In contrast, if a rent control ordinance were passed today in Richmond (for example) where there has never been rent control, all units built before Feb. 1, 1995 could be covered.
4. The initial rent in most cases. In California, rent controls are limited to current tenancies. This means that while someone occupies a unit, their rent increases may be limited, but once a tenant moves, with limited exceptions, the landlord can increase the rent asked of a new tenant to any amount. This is called “vacancy decontrol” and it is the law in California due to the previously mentioned Costa-Hawkins Act. Before this state law was passed, Berkeley, East Palo Alto, Santa Monica, and West Hollywood had rent control ordinances where the rent could only be increased by a limited amount when a unit changed tenants (vacancy control). Cities can still opt to control initial rents where the prior tenant moved out pursuant to a 60-day notice, but that is a very narrow exception to the general rule that rent control doesn’t apply to the initial rent.

***In short, Costa Hawkins exempts new units, single family homes and condominiums from rent control, and also bans vacancy control in most cases.***

However, Costa Hawkins does NOT stop cities from passing just cause for eviction protections. So many cities extend eviction protections and relocation payments to tenants in housing (like single family homes) where the rent cannot be regulated.

In 2017, the State Assembly Bill 1506 was introduced in 2017 to repeal the Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act. The bill is pending at the time of publication of this toolkit. Tenant groups across California have identified Costa Hawkins repeal as a top statewide priority.

## Timelines & Procedures

State law governs eviction procedures and timelines. Elected officials will often suggest that rather than adopting rent control, a city simply provide more notice for tenants facing rent increases or being evicted. Most of these proposals are preempted by state law which sets forth the timeline for evictions and rent increases. Courts have upheld the municipal power to pass rent control and limits on the grounds for eviction, while eviction procedure requirements (such as requiring a landlord to get a “certificate of eviction” from the city before evicting) have been struck down by the courts as inconsistent with state law. Any changes to eviction procedures and timelines would have to be changed at the state level.





*Photo: San Mateo Residents for Community Stability*

## KEY DECISIONS ON WHAT TO PUT IN RENT CONTROL LAW

Certain key decisions should be made with a campaign coalition about the scope of your ordinance. We urge activists to develop a platform with answers to these basic questions which will form the core of the ordinance before any ordinance drafting begins.

Here are key features to think about:

### Rent

- What should the annual rent increase limit be? Annual limits on rent increases as a percentage of the change in the CPI. We recommend no more than 100% of the CPI, and prefer the approach of San Francisco which allows increases of 65% of CPI. Regardless of the amount, only one increase should be allowed per year.
- When should a landlord be allowed additional rent for increased costs? This generally comes up when a landlord needs to make “capital improvements” and wants to pass on costs to the tenant. Any additional rent increases should be the minimum necessary to provide the landlord the legally required “fair return.” The ordinance should require that a landlord who wants to raise the rent above the allowable annual increase must petition the rent board for permission to impose that increase. There should be a cap on any such increases so that tenants are not overburdened with rent increases.
- Should a landlord be able to bank rent increases? What should happen if a landlord doesn’t impose an allowable rent increase one year? Can they use that rent increase in the future? If they get to apply it to a future year, it’s called “banking” the rent increase. If not, it’s a “use it or lose it” city. Cities vary on whether they allow this. If banked rent increases are allowed, there



should be a cap on the total amount allowed.

- Will your ordinance contain a rent roll back, and if so, to what date? Unfortunately, some landlords will jack up rents if they think a rent control law is about to pass. Fortunately, courts allow your ordinance to roll back rents to a date before the ordinance was adopted, for example, the date when it was first proposed at City council or first circulated for signature. We recommend including a roll back date as a key feature of the ordinance.
- What units will your rent limits cover? Certain units are exempt from price controls under state law: properties built after 1995, single family homes, and condos. Other properties (like public housing) already have regulated rents under state or federal programs so those rents usually cannot be regulated. We recommend covering all units you can legally cover.

## Evictions

- Under what circumstances will the ordinance allow eviction? State law requires the ordinance to allow eviction for nonpayment of rent, breach of lease (including illegal subletting), and nuisance. In addition, all rent control laws provide owners the right to evict to move into their property. And under California's Ellis Act, a landlord can evict to remove the units from the rental market entirely. Your ordinance will contain at least these required bases for eviction. The ordinance should also require that the landlord specify the basis for eviction in the notice to terminate tenancy.
- What relocation payments will be required? We recommend that all ordinances require relocation payments to tenants evicted for "no fault". The amounts vary by city. Requirements of more than \$15,000 per household have been enforced by courts, and some ordinances require higher payments for seniors, disabled tenant, and households with children. One option in drafting an ordinance is to require relocation payments, but leave the amounts up to the City Council.
- What units will your eviction protections cover? The ordinance can extend eviction controls to all properties, even those exempt from price

controls on the rent under state law. In other words, you can apply eviction protections to buildings built after 1995, single family homes, and condos, even though you cannot regulate rent increases on those properties. We recommend covering as many properties as possible.

## Administration

- Will there be an elected or Appointed Rent Board? The Rent Board passes regulations to implement the ordinance. Rent board commissioners can be elected or appointed. Generally, we prefer elected rent boards. If you go with appointed rent board, consider who gets to make the appointments and what qualifies one for a seat on the rent board.
- Who will pay the costs of the Rent Board? The rent board should be funded by a per unit fee on landlords. Some cities allow that cost to be partially passed through to tenants. We recommend that no more than 50% of the fees be passed through to tenants.

## Enforcement

- What happens when a landlord violates the ordinance? The ordinance should include a strong private right of action so that tenants can sue for money damages, injunctive relief, and attorneys' fees against a landlord that violates the ordinance. This is essential for enforcement.

## Additional Tenant Protections

- Will your ordinance address more than rents and evictions? Local tenant protection laws can cover more than just rent increases and evictions. For example, cities can pass anti-harassment laws, security deposit interest requirements, disclosure obligations, routine code inspection programs, and annual registration of rental units. Consider whether any of these should be part of your rent ordinance or whether you are better off tackling these through separate laws.

Tenants Together is available to assist member organizations with making these key decisions. Contact us at [info@tenantstogether.org](mailto:info@tenantstogether.org). We can also help connect you with members of our Tenant Lawyer Network who may be willing to help draft the ordinance.



Photo: Los Angeles Tenants Union

## LANDLORD OPPOSITION STRATEGIES

By now, we know the Landlord's playbook to stop rent control. They use the same talking points and strategies across the state, orchestrated by the California Apartment Association and their local affiliates, as well as the California Association of Realtors. It's important to understand that tenants can prevail, but it requires persistence and organizing. The real estate industry hates rent control because it lowers their profits, and they will do everything they can to stop it. In practice, that means two things: they will lie about rent control and spend money to spread the lies.

### **Landlord Step 1: Lobby City Council Members Early On Against Rent Control**

Landlords will use their political influence to lobby politicians. They will inform City Council members that rent control is a failed policy, will have unintended consequences, and is unnecessary. To

counter this, you need to organize large numbers of supporters to demand rent control and have individual meetings with councilmembers early on to gauge where they stand.

### **Landlord Step 2: Divert the Conversation by Offering False Solutions**

If tenant organizing is producing momentum, landlords will offer false solutions. For example, they will make efforts to self-police, as the California Apartment Association did with a nice but useless mailer to San Mateo landlords asking them not to raise rents over 10%. They will claim that the answer lies in just building more housing, not protecting existing tenants, to divert the conversation to housing supply. If all that fails, they will urge councilmembers to adopt a meaningless voluntary rent mediation program, something that will do nothing to solve the problem, but will give them cover.





Photo: Jim Wilson/The New York Times

### **Landlord Step 3: Use A Referendum to Repeal What City Council Passes**

The City Council has passed a rent control law. Now what? Landlords may do a referendum as they did in Richmond, Mountain View, and Santa Rosa. To do that, they need to gather signatures of 10% of the voters within 30 days of the law being adopted. They will pay signature gatherers to come in and gather signatures. There are numerous reports of these signature gatherers misrepresenting the ordinance to get residents to sign. If landlords get the required number of signatures, the law goes back to the city council which can either repeal it or place it on the ballot for voters to decide.

### **Landlord Step 4: Contest The Measure at the Ballot With Money & Misinformation**

Landlords will spend millions to fight rent control at the ballot. They will mischaracterize the ordinance

and blanket voters with mailers about how the measure will undermine their property rights. Tenants do not need to outspend them, but we need to be prepared to mount a strong campaign in the face of this kind of corporate spending.

### **Landlord Step 5: Block Implementation through Legal Challenges and Weak Regulations**

Once Rent Control is passed at the ballot, landlords will likely sue to invalidate the law, although that strategy has failed for them recently with courts rejected their lawsuits in Mountain View and Richmond. Landlords will also try to gut the law by lobbying the rent board and city council to adopt weak implementing regulations that favor landlords. Be prepared to continue organizing tenants after passage of rent control to block these attempts and make sure the law is implemented and enforced to protect tenants.



# COUNTERPOINTS TO LANDLORD LIES

Landlord Lie	Truth
<p><b>Rent control is a failed policy.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cities with rent control have the highest rents.</li> <li>In every Economics 101 class you learn rent control doesn't work.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rent control in California works to keep tenants in their homes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fourteen cities in California have rent control, which has prevented low-income tenants from being displaced as market rents rise.</li> <li>Economists' arguments against rent control address rent ceilings/freezes, not rent control which allows reasonable annual increases.</li> <li>Economists also say free trade benefits everyone. American economists oppose market interventions (esp. price interventions) for ideological reasons.</li> <li>Housing instability actually damages the economy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tenants have too many eviction protections already.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We don't need just cause protections because tenants are already protected against retaliation and discrimination.</li> <li>Tenants can drag out evictions forever.</li> </ul>	<p><b>California law is harsh toward tenants.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>California tenants have weaker protections than in many other states. Evictions are fast-tracked in courts. Tenants who are late on rent get only a three-day notice to pay or quit before eviction, compared with other states that give 10, 14 or 30 days.</li> <li>Even where tenants theoretically have legal defenses to eviction, most go unenforced. Without a just cause for eviction law, tenants often lose their homes unfairly. In theory, they can file suit under state retaliation and discrimination laws after they have been evicted, but most tenants do not have the time or means for such lawsuits.</li> </ul>
<p><b>You can't run a landlord business under rent control.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The government has no right to tell a landlord how much rent to charge.</li> <li>Rent control is a "taking." (legal term)</li> <li>Annual allowable increase is not enough to cover the cost of business.</li> <li>Landlords need to raise rents during boom times because they lose money during recessions.</li> <li>If landlords can't pass through the cost of debt service, then only the very wealthy will be able to buy rental properties.</li> <li>Rent control lowers property values.</li> <li>Landlords will leave homes vacant if rent control is implemented.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Landlords are not getting out of the rental business under rent control.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlords profit from increasing property values. They do not need to impose exorbitant rent increases to continue operating.</li> <li>We shouldn't conflate "taking" with "rent regulation" because they are not one in the same. The Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld the right of communities to regulate rents and evictions.</li> <li>Few landlords keep their units vacant on purpose. Usually they are trying to convert a rental unit to another use -- like short term tourist rentals. Rent control cities usually have to prevent such conversion, but this is not an argument not to have rent control.</li> <li>Under Prop. 13, the biggest cost -- property tax -- does not rise with the property value.</li> <li>Annual increases are allowed, and additional costs can be passed through to tenants.</li> <li>Real estate-speculators, not landlords, are making a quick profit off of rent controlled buildings they can buy for "cheap" relative to other properties and flip them by turning them into condos.</li> </ul>



<p><b>The invisible hand of the market will solve the housing crisis.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We just need to build more.</li> <li>• It's better for the price of housing to just be decided by the market.</li> <li>• Rent control stops new housing from being built.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The market is a proven failure.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply-side economics doesn't work. This is "trickle-down-housing" theory. If supply-side economics worked to provide affordable housing, places like Houston would not also have a housing crisis.</li> <li>• The "invisible hand of the market," the speculation on land and housing is driving our housing crisis.</li> <li>• Now the biggest owner of single-family home rentals in California is not mom-and-pop landlords but Wall Street corporations like Blackstone-Invitation Homes, Colony Financial, and Waypoint Homes.</li> <li>• Rent control does not drive up the cost of housing. If it did, the real estate industry would love it.</li> <li>• Cities with rent control are experiencing some of the highest per capita construction rates in the state.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tenants should "just move" if they can't afford the rent.</b></p>	<p><b>Given the race and class dynamics of the housing crisis, "just move" is an argument for segregation.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displacement causes trauma and severs tenants from their communities, schools, doctors, services, places of worship, etc. Families should not be uprooted just so landlords can make unregulated profits.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landlords can regulate themselves. Not all landlords are bad.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landlords don't raise rents excessively.</li> <li>• Just cause for eviction isn't needed because landlords want to have tenants.</li> <li>• Rent control should not apply to small, mom and pop landlords.</li> <li>• Cities should pass mediation programs instead.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rent control is not punishment; it is a protection for vulnerable tenants.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All landlords should follow basic practices like reasonable rent increases and only evicting for good reason. These principles should apply to landlords large or small.</li> <li>• Good landlords are unaffected by the restrictions because they already refrain from huge rent increases and arbitrary evictions.</li> <li>• Rent control will force other landlords who are not socially minded to play by the same rules.</li> <li>• Mediation programs are a proven failure and do not address the problem of rising rents and evictions. Rent increases are not a "dispute" between landlords and tenants; they are an exercise of power by landlords. Mediation is by definition voluntary and cannot compel unreasonable landlords to be reasonable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landlords are not responsible for rising rents.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rising rents are a community-wide and market-based problem. Rent control places the solution on the backs of one industry.</li> <li>• Rent control divides the community by placing property owners against residents.</li> <li>• Landlords are just charging "market" rents and have to do so to make a profit.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Landlords have free will; there is no "invisible hand of the market" that forces a landlord to gouge tenants with rent increases.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why should we as a community should have to bear the burden of displacement and neighborhood instability so that a single industry can profit unfettered by regulation?</li> <li>• Landlords don't like being regulated and spend a lot of money spinning rent control as divisive and controversial. It's mainly landlords that oppose it, and particularly landlords that want to continue with unlimited rent increases and unregulated evictions.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Rent control causes the “locked-in” effect where tenants never move from their homes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants will never leave and buy a home if there is rent control and just cause for eviction.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Why is it bad for people to stay in their homes long-term, create social capital in a community, and get to know their neighbors?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people who rent will likely always be renters and they should be supported in wanting stability in where they live. We value long term tenure for homeowners; we should do the same for renters.</li> <li>• Even accepting that this is a problem, the problem is caused by landlord laws that ban vacancy control. Under a stronger rent control system, tenants could move to new housing at controlled rates. Landlords made sure with Costa Hawkins that could not happen in California.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rent control and just cause costs too much to administer and creates too much government bureaucracy.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rent board in this proposal is un-elected. Voters will have no say over what they do.</li> <li>• The rent board is elected. An election will cost too much money.</li> <li>• Why can't you tell us how much rent control will cost taxpayers?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rent control can be cost neutral for cities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many city administrative positions are unelected and this is not controversial. A rent board is just a different kind of administrative role. Most rent boards are unelected and they function well.</li> <li>• An elected rent board gives the community more control over the rent program and provides greater accountability.</li> <li>• Any costs to administer the program can come through a low per unit fee paid by landlords (and can be shared with tenants).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rent control doesn't help low-income people. It helps rich tenants.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be means testing so only low-income tenants benefit from rent control.</li> <li>• Rent control is a subsidy from private landlords (and as such should only be for low-income tenants).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rent control is price regulation, not a subsidy program.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The US Supreme Court made clear in 1983 that rent control is not a subsidy program but landlords keep making this meritless argument.</li> <li>• A subsidy is a benefit given by the government to groups or individuals usually in the form of a cash payment or tax reduction. Regulating prices is not a subsidy.</li> <li>• Means testing is a solution looking for a problem. Most renters are low-income, and in many cities have half the median income as homeowners. Means testing is also an administrative nightmare, costly, and results in invasion of financial privacy.</li> <li>• Means testing will actually have the reverse effect and cause landlords to discriminate more against low income tenants (usually people of color) because landlords won't want to rent their units out to them.</li> </ul>











Photo: Fair and Affordable Santa Rosa

# RENT CONTROL BALLOT STRATEGY READINESS

**Thinking of going to the ballot for rent control? Here are five key questions to consider in assessing your readiness to pass rent control at the ballot in California:**

1. What percentage of your city are renters?
  - You can look this up in your city's local Housing Element plan, which can be found online on your city's website, or on the Census Fact Finder.
2. Is there a strong local tenant organization that can lead the campaign?
3. How many of your city's rental units must be exempt from rent control because of the state law the Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act?
  - This includes apartments built after 1995, single-family homes, and condos. This information is also in the city's housing element.
4. How have voters in your city voted on prior ballot measures related to land use or housing, on the state and local level?
5. Have you formed a local coalition of community, faith, labor, progressive homeowners, or other potential allies, donors, and volunteers?

If you don't know the answer to these questions, or the answer is no to any of these questions, then there is work that needs to be done before attempting a ballot campaign.

Tenants Together is available to assist our member organizations (and other coalitions, on a limited basis) who are working on rent control campaigns. If you are thinking about a ballot measure, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss at [info@tenantstogether.org](mailto:info@tenantstogether.org).

Photo: Housing for All Burlingame





## TENANT GUIDE FOR SPEAKING TO MEDIA

Whether you're reaching out to journalists to tell your story or have been contacted by journalists who are looking for information, documents or quotes, interacting with the media can be daunting. Here is a guide for dealing with journalists.

***Many reporters take landlord talking points as truth. It takes practice to push back and reframe the narrative to be positive toward tenants.***

The ideal story is well documented, will strike a personal chord with an audience and will have wide-reaching implications. Often, those stories are bred out of many smaller ones, and the fact that you are willing to tell your story will make a big impact on the broader struggle for renters' rights. If you make claims, have proof. Give details. Return phone calls, and be respectful of deadlines.

If reporters are asking you for information or an interview, respond in some form. If you do not want to be quoted or provide information, tell them that, even if only through e-mail. Make sure you get

confirmation from the reporter if you want something to be "off the record." Without a commitment, they may use what you say or write. Be clear about which information is OK for them to use for publication and which is not. It is important to remember that public events and public spaces – including parks, sidewalks and some government buildings – as well as the people in them can be photographed and recorded on video without specific permission. However, you can always ask not to be included in footage.

Usually, journalists will want to verify your name for photo or video captions or narration. If you do not provide your name, you are less likely to be included in their coverage. Photographers and multimedia journalists cannot trespass on private property, though they can get shots of it from a public area. If you give an interview on video or allow one to be recorded for radio, be aware that the footage will be edited at the reporter's discretion.





Photo: Mike Dennis

## **DURING INTERVIEWS, DO:**

- Create talking points that support your message and practice them prior to an interview.
- Ask your own questions.
- Stay on topic by reinforcing your talking points.
- Speak about things you know.
- Tell your story. Use examples, anecdotes and personal testimonies so the audience feels connected to your situation.
- Be concise and to the point.
- Follow up, both after the interview to find out when and how your information will be used and after the story has been published to give feedback.
- Take your time to answer a question or collect your thoughts if needed.
- Correct misinformation the reporter offers or cites.
- Assert that tenants are valuable members of the community and deserve to be treated with respect.

## **DURING INTERVIEWS, DON'T:**

- Don't apologize for asserting the right to housing and tenants' rights.
- Don't accept framing that characterizes tenants as: transient, criminals, not contributing to community as much as homeowners, having too many rights, not taking care of property.
- Don't be pressured to give up personal information that you are not comfortable sharing.
- Don't give information you are not confident is accurate.
- Don't answer questions you don't understand – break the questions down, or ask the reporter to do so.
- Don't allow the interview to be taped or recorded unless you have given consent.
- Don't expect to see the story before it is published. However, you may ask to see your quotes that are being used.







## KEY MEDIA TERMS:

- **Angle:** The focus, approach or perspective of the story.
- **Beat:** A reporter's area of focus. Examples include public safety, health, crime or education.
- **Embargoed:** requesting a reporter not release event or report details until a specific date.
- **On background:** Information given to a reporter that provides important context, which might be included in the final report but will not be attributed to you by name and cannot be quoted.
- **On the record:** Information given to a reporter that can be quoted, paraphrased, cited and attributed to you.
- **Off the record:** Information given to a reporter for his or her personal understanding but cannot be quoted, paraphrased, cited or otherwise attributed to you in any way.
- **Fact checking:** Verifying that objective statements made in the published product are accurate
- **Talking Points:** statements that support your message.



# SHARE THIS TOOLKIT

**With so many lies spread about rent control, we need people-power to push back!**

## **Sample text to share on Facebook and Twitter**

The best defense against rising rents and displacement: #rentcontrol and #justcause eviction protections. [bit.ly/RentControl4All](http://bit.ly/RentControl4All)

In 2008, CA voters defeated landlord attack on #rentcontrol by a 22 pt margin. #NotControversial <http://bit.ly/RentControl4All>

In #CA, you need \$30/hour to afford a two-bedroom aptmt. #HousingWage #StopRisingRents #RentControl [bit.ly/RentControl4All](http://bit.ly/RentControl4All)

Keep tenants in their homes! Learn more about #rentcontrol #justcause protections: [bit.ly/RentControl4All](http://bit.ly/RentControl4All)

Without #rentcontrol, landlords are free to raise the rents however much they want. Learn more: [bit.ly/RentControl4All](http://bit.ly/RentControl4All)

Displacement disproportionately impacts low-income communities of color. #StopRacistDisplacement #RentControl [bit.ly/RentControl4All](http://bit.ly/RentControl4All)

The fight for immigrant rights and environmental justice includes the fight to stay in our homes. #RentControl #JustCause [bit.ly/RentControl4All](http://bit.ly/RentControl4All)

## **Share it with an image!**

**#RentControl #JustCause**

- Is not "punishment for landlords."
- IS protection for vulnerable tenants.

**#RentControl**

- Leaves tenants more \$\$ to spend on the local economy.
- When landlords get windfall profits, other businesses lose.

**#RentControl #JustCause**

- Preserves diverse communities.
- Keeps tenants in their homes.
- Helps prevent homelessness.

**#RentControl**

- Prevents mass displacement.
- Helps tenants stay and invest in their communities.
- Builds social capital for all.



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**Urban Displacement Project. "Rent Control: The Key to Neighborhood Stabilization?"**







**TENANTS  
TOGETHER**

California's  
Statewide Organization  
for Renters' Rights



**WARNING: HANDLE RENT CONTROL WITH CARE**

Prepare for serious opposition. Sound political strategy and coordination with allies required. A weak rent control law sets a bad precedent and can do more harm than good to tenants and our movement. Don't go it alone.