

From: sarahsawyer3@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Sarah Sawyer](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:16 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy by your support is alarming and unconscionable. This amendment goes against the will of the voters who elected you and the diverse set of shareholders that made up the Rent Stabilization Task Force and voted against it in their recommendations. Not only that, it serves only to harm renters and low income families - the very people rent stabilization is designed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Sarah Sawyer
1157 Hague Ave Saint Paul, MN 55104-6458
sarahsawyer3@gmail.com

From: mnowacze74@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Matthew Nowaczewski](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:16 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

Dear Council,

I'm 47 years old and have lived in St. Paul proudly my entire life. I love my city. I am a metro area police officer with daily hands on experience working with our homeless, mentally ill, and substance addicted brothers and sisters.

Also, as a police officer, husband of a nurse, father of St. Paul public school kids, and engaged citizen of St. Paul, I've spent my 24 year career witnessing the reality of power abuse over people living at or below the poverty line and people of color. These are very real issues affecting our fellow human beings trying to survive in very human ways. This ordinance is for them. Power and dollar signs too often get in the way of love and dignity.

You actually have a power yourself. You can give peace of mind to thousands of people who would give anything for it. I humbly ask you to pray for courage, and remove full vacancy decontrol from the ordinance. If you do this, St. Paul will still be a desirable place to live. Also, by doing this you'd be simply standing along side St. Paul voters and the task force who painstakingly did the work in the first place.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Matthew Nowaczewski
377 Daly St Saint Paul, MN 55102-3513
mnowacze74@gmail.com

From: lizzycantley@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Lizzy Cantley](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:16 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

Voting on the Rent Stabilization Policy as it stands, should be a VOTE NO due to the full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance.

The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy by your support is utterly unthinkable and absolutely WRONG. This amendment harms renters and especially low income families... the exact people that rent stabilization is designed to protect.

I write to you as teacher of low income families. These students need something consistent, something stable in their lives and they can't get that when the system is rigged against their hard working families, working multiple jobs trying to keep a roof over their heads.

This amendment goes against the will of the voters that elected you and clearly voted for Rent Stabilization to pass.

Please, I ask you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote NO, NO, NO on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Lizzy Cantley
855 Idaho Ave W Saint Paul, MN 55117-3469
lizzycantley@gmail.com

From: debdavenido@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Deb Avenido](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:16 AM

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As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Deb Avenido
958 Nebraska Ave W Saint Paul, MN 55117-3329
debdavenido@gmail.com

From: bstaylor50@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Barbara Taylor](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:16 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

Councilman Tolbert,

I have attended the in person city council meetings regarding the Rent Control ordinance. I live in your ward and am displeased with changes made in the recommendations by the task force.

The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy by your support is alarming and unconscionable. This amendment goes against the will of the voters who elected you and the diverse set of shareholders that made up the Rent Stabilization Task Force and voted against it in their recommendations. Not only that, it serves only to harm renters and low income families - the very people rent stabilization is designed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Barbara Taylor
1326 Watson Ave Saint Paul, MN 55116-1635
bstaylor50@gmail.com

From: nbarnoon@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Nili Barnoon](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:17 AM

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As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Nili Barnoon
1459 Wellesley Ave Saint Paul, MN 55105-2420
nbarnoon@macalester.edu

From: aegenberger@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Amy Egenberger](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:17 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

I am a renter in Saint Paul, and I urge you to take a strong stand for a more just housing policy.

The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy by your support is alarming and unconscionable. This amendment goes against the will of the voters who elected you and the diverse set of shareholders that made up the Rent Stabilization Task Force and voted against it in their recommendations. Not only that, it serves only to harm renters and low income families - the very people rent stabilization is designed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Amy Egenberger
846 Lincoln Ave Saint Paul, MN 55105-3349
aegenberger@gmail.com

From: demigarbow@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Demi Garbow](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:17 AM

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As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Demi Garbow
380 Ramsey St Saint Paul, MN 55102-2382
demigarbow@gmail.com

From: zbeans@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Arline Datu](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:18 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy by your support is alarming and unconscionable. This amendment goes against the will of the voters who elected you and the diverse set of shareholders that made up the Rent Stabilization Task Force and voted against it in their recommendations. Not only that, it serves only to harm renters and low income families - the very people rent stabilization is designed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Arline Datu
93 Lexington Pkwy S Apt Saint Paul, MN 55105-2724
zbeans@aol.com

From: vivianihekoronye@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Vivian Ihekoronye](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Vote NO + Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:18 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

While I have disappointment about the good amendments that didn't pass such as including renters in affordable housing back into the policy and having a 15 year new construction exemption that has no look back, the most egregious and unexpected bad amendment that passed was the full vacancy decontrol amendment. The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment by your support is alarming and unconscionable. This amendment goes against the will of the voters who elected you and the diverse set of shareholders that made up the Rent Stabilization Task Force and voted against it in their recommendations. Not only that, it serves only to harm renters and low income families - the very people rent stabilization is designed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to vote NO on this weakened rent stabilization policy and work swiftly to remove full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance.

Sincerely,
Vivian Ihekoronye
295 Arlington Ave W Saint Paul, MN 55117-5710
vivianihekoronye@gmail.com

From: todd.reemtsma@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Todd Reemtsma](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:18 AM

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The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy by your support is alarming and unconscionable. This amendment goes against the will of the voters who elected you and the diverse set of shareholders that made up the Rent Stabilization Task Force and voted against it in their recommendations. Not only that, it serves only to harm renters and low income families - the very people rent stabilization is designed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Todd Reemtsma
1703 Beechwood Ave Saint Paul, MN 55116-2421
todd.reemtsma@gmail.com

From: sam@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [SAM Greene](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:19 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy by your support is alarming and unconscionable. This amendment goes against the will of the voters who elected you and the diverse set of shareholders that made up the Rent Stabilization Task Force and voted against it in their recommendations. Not only that, it serves only to harm renters and low income families - the very people rent stabilization is designed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
SAM Greene
536 Holly Ave Saint Paul, MN 55102-3269
sam@sciencepiction.com

From: vowiebe@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Virgil Wiebe](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Full Vacancy Decontrol - please remove this element
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:19 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

I acknowledge the need to encourage more housing construction. That said, I think full vacancy decontrol is not needed and will result in rents rising beyond the means of low and moderate income people. Please reconsider this amendment.

Sincerely,
Virgil Wiebe
1055 Van Slyke Ave Saint Paul, MN 55103-1039
vowiebe@yahoo.com

From: gfsantiago89@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Gabriela Santiago](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:19 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

I was deeply disappointed to see the Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy. This amendment goes against the will of the voters, and will harm renters and low income families, the very people that rent stabilization was proposed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Gabriela Santiago
1024 Marshall Ave Saint Paul, MN 55104-6505
gfsantiago89@gmail.com

From: ckdiers@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Catherine Diers](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:19 AM

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As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

I voted FOR rent stabilization along with the majority of voters. It is disheartening to have this amendment even happening. Please help rectify this.

Sincerely,
Catherine Diers
758 Cottage Ave W Saint Paul, MN 55117-4012
ckdiers@gmail.com

From: mrosehallback@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Madeleine Hallberg](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:20 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

My name is Madeleine Hallberg, and I have been a resident of Ward 3 for the past five years.

Last week, I testified at the St. Paul City Council Meeting on behalf of St. Paul renters. I'm following up to reiterate the necessity of honoring the votes of the majority of residents who want rent stabilization in our city, as well as the recommendations of the Rent Stabilization Task Force.

The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy by your support is alarming and unconscionable. This amendment goes against the will of the voters who elected you and the diverse set of shareholders that made up the Rent Stabilization Task Force and voted against it in their recommendations. Not only that, it serves only to harm renters and low income families - the very people rent stabilization is designed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

The Council's actions to gut Rent Stabilization at the expense of tens of thousands of households, and for the benefit of corporations, before there has even been time to see the true impact of the policies is beyond disappointing.

Sincerely,
Madeleine Hallberg
1811 Randolph Ave Saint Paul, MN 55105-2157
mrosehallback@gmail.com

From: lcardner5@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Lauren Gardner](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:20 AM

Dear STP Council Hearing,

The Council's passage of the full vacancy decontrol amendment to the rent stabilization policy by your support is alarming and unconscionable. This amendment goes against the will of the voters who elected you and the diverse set of shareholders that made up the Rent Stabilization Task Force and voted against it in their recommendations. Not only that, it serves only to harm renters and low income families - the very people rent stabilization is designed to protect.

As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Lauren Gardner
1521 Grand Ave Saint Paul, MN 55105-2259
lcardner5@gmail.com

From: lilianeaislyn@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Liliane Aislyn](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:20 AM

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As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Liliane Aislyn
777 Berry St Saint Paul, MN 55114-4006
lilianeaislyn@gmail.com

From: sai.mkomo@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of [Saida Mkomo](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:33:20 AM

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As this policy currently stands, I urge you and the rest of council to swiftly right your wrong by removing full vacancy decontrol from the rent stabilization ordinance. Unless removed, the Council should vote 'no' on this terrible policy.

Sincerely,
Saida Mkomo
3606 Emerson Ave N Minneapolis, MN 55412-2008
sai.mkomo@gmail.com

From: [Heintz, Polly \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [Weiner, Greg \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: FW: Rent Stabilization
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 9:26:11 AM

Polly Heintz | Executive Assistant to Councilmember Jane Prince

Pronouns: she/her

P: 651-266-8673

E: polly.heintz@ci.stpaul.mn.us

From: Faith Latimer <faithlatimer@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 8:35 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Rent Stabilization

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Hello Council Member Prince,

I have been watching the rent stabilization process unfold and find it very distressing. I really believe the large developers have bullied the rest of the citizens. I'm all for compromise, but the 'full vacancy decontrol' piece obviously gives landlords incentive to get rid of renters. It's wrong. The 20-year exemption with retroactivity is also way out of line, and disregards the hard work of the stake-holder task force.

On September 14, I hope the full vacancy decontrol amendment will be stricken from the policy.

If that isn't possible, please vote no on the policy.

Thank you for your attention.

Faith Latimer
1124 Fairmount Ave
St. Paul 55105
651-207-9830

Faith Latimer

From: [Heintz, Polly \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [Weiner, Greg \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: FW: rent control
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 10:03:32 AM

From: Charlie Borden <mrwoo@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2022 7:05 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: rent control

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Dear Ms. Prince,

We are not in your Ward (unfortunately) but we just wanted to say THANK YOU SO MUCH for advocating for full vacancy decontrol. As providers of beautiful affordable housing, for the first time in 30 years we have felt we had no choice but to raise rents significantly. We just felt we couldn't continue to give huge discounts to our long term tenants (15, 25 and 30 years) if we couldn't move towards market rate if they chose to move. I commend you for listening and heeding the words of other small providers who live in and care for their communities where they provide housing. We have told our tenants that we will be able to lower their rents if full vacancy decontrol passes. Thank you again for your thoughtful and wise approach to affordable housing.

Shelly Schenfeld and
Charlie Borden
Mrwoo@comcast.net
651-399-0214

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

-Mahatma Gandhi

From: [Heintz, Polly \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [Weiner, Greg \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: FW: Thank you for your common sense proposals & statements on rent control
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 10:44:48 AM

From: Michaela Toohey <michaelatoohey@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 10:42 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Thank you for your common sense proposals & statements on rent control

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Hi Jane -

I've reached out to you in the past on rent control and wanted to reach out again to thank you for your common sense votes and statements recently on amendments to the rent control ordinance. I am really grateful for the courageous and honest leadership you are bringing to the table on this issue.

I'm a native St. Paul resident, Realtor, longtime Women Winning supporter, and a mom and pop landlord in St. Paul. I care deeply about affordable housing and the continued growth and vibrancy of our city.

I was gratified (and relieved) to see you bringing attention to the importance of vacancy decontrol for mom and pop landlords and their tenants. You really get this issue and I'm so thankful for your advocacy.

Due to the new rent control ordinance, I had to raise rents on some great long-term tenants for the first time in years this May - two sets of tenants are retired couples on fixed incomes. My husband and I bought our triplex 15 years ago and owner-occupied for 12. Our policy has always been to keep rents the same for long term tenants without the need to raise rents 3% every year to "keep up" and be able to stay at a fair market value. With the passage of the rent control referendum, I had to raise rent on everyone this May, which was really counter to how we have managed our business and worked to attract and keep long-term tenants by keeping rent stable or only making nominal increases every 3-4 years. It has worked very well for us and for our tenants, many of whom have stayed for several years.

I loved this quote in the Pioneer Press: "I've talked to numerous landlords who say, 'I have tenants I've rented to for 5, 10, 15 years. I don't raise their rents, knowing that when the unit is vacated, I can then raise the rents,' " Prince said. "We have put landlords in the position where they feel they have to raise the rents 3 percent every year, which is more (than they would have without rent control)."

Keep up the good work Jane! Thank you!

Sincerely,
Michaela Toohey
651-253-6830

From: [Kate O'Connell and Gary Olson](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#); [#CI-StPaul_Ward4](#)
Subject: Please reject amendments to St. Paul's rent stabilization
Date: Monday, September 12, 2022 11:14:40 AM

Dear Council Members,

I echo everything that Vivian Ihekoronye from ISIAIAH said at the Wednesday, September 7 City Council meeting.

There is deep frustration for the City Council's evisceration of the rent-stabilization protections passed by St. Paul voters past year. St. Paul residents gathered over 10,000 signatures to put rent stabilization on the ballot, and St. Paul voters approved rent stabilization a year ago.

However, if approved, the amendments approved by the City Council would greatly harm renters who are already struggling to pay for rent, food, medical bills and other necessities.

The City Council managed to make things worse for people renting homes in St. Paul, by:

- 1) removing existing rent-stabilization protection for thousands of people renting in St. Paul and
- 2) giving landlords the incentive to evict or force out renters, so they can increase rents for the next set of tenants.

City Councilmember Mitra Jalali worked hard to protect people in St. Paul who are already struggling to pay increasing rents and remain in their homes, offering reasonable proposals. Unfortunately, the City Council did not approve the reasonable amendments she offered, specifically:

- Not removing rent-stabilization protection for renters who live in rental housing that was made available within in the past 20 years. If the goal of this retroactive exemption is to encourage new rental facilities to be available, this proposal does not make sense, since these facilities already exist and have been able to charge whatever rents they wished.
- Keeping rent-stabilization protection in place for people living in low-income housing. Unfortunately, Councilmember Jalali's proposal failed on Wednesday, 3-4. As a result, the current proposal is to eliminate rent-stabilization protection for people in affordable housing units.

Worse, the City Council approved an amendment proposed by Councilmember Prince, to allow landlords to increase rents without limitation when a rental unit is vacated for any reason. This proposal incentivizes landlords to evict or push tenants out so they can raise rents, as has been seen in other places in the country. It was particularly painful to witness this proposal being passed, even after Councilmember Jalali warned of such effects.

The City Council claimed that these harmful changes for renters would ensure that more affordable housing would be built. But that claim fails, since St. Paul already has too few affordable housing options, which happened with no rent stabilization. There is nothing in the

amendments approved by the City Council that would make more affordable housing available.

I urge the City Council to reject the amendments to the existing rent stabilization ordinance in its current form.

I also urge the City Council to focus on protecting St. Paul renters, as the City Council promised to do over a year ago.

Sincerely,

Kate O'Connell
1506 Simpson Street
St. Paul, MN 55108

From: [Heintz, Polly \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
To: [Weiner, Greg \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: rent control emails
Date: Monday, September 12, 2022 1:34:14 PM
Attachments: [Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.msg](#)
[Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.msg](#)
[Remove Full Vacancy Decontrol from the Rent Stabilization Ordinance.msg](#)



September 13, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Saint Paul City Council
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RE: Amending Chapter 193A of the Legislative Code pertaining to rent stabilization.

Dear Saint Paul City Council,

Housing Justice Center is a nonprofit legal and policy advocacy organization dedicated to the preservation and production of affordable housing and the protection of the rights of people who need affordable places to call home. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments regarding the impact that the current iteration of the ordinance will have to fair housing in the city of Saint Paul.

Fair Housing Concerns

The affordable housing exemption as written is overly broad, does not address any specific problem, and has vast unintended consequences for Saint Paul renters.

Ordinance 22-37 as currently written exempts any property that:

Housing restricted by deed, regulatory restriction contained in an agreement with a government agency, or other recorded document as affordable housing for persons and families of very low, low, or moderate income, as defined by State or federal law, or subject to an agreement that provides housing subsidies for affordable housing for persons and families of very low, low, or moderate income, as defined in State and federal law.

A conservative estimate, based on the properties in Saint Paul that receive 4d tax treatment, indicates a minimum of 7200 apartments — home to over 20,000 Saint Paul renters — would be excluded from the protections of the rent stabilization policy. Even this, however, is an undercount, as it is unclear by the language of Ordinance 22-37 what constitutes “affordable housing for persons and families of very low, low, or moderate income, as defined by State or federal law”. Presumably, with no other definition at our disposal, this would include properties that have a “recorded document as affordable housing” under the HUD definition of “moderate income”, which includes up to 80% AMI. For reference, 80% of AMI under the HUD guidelines is \$89,400, a number that well exceeds the median household income for the city of Saint Paul. This represents over 10% of the rental housing in the City of Saint Paul, and in some wards constitutes a much larger percentage of the overall rental housing. For example, in Ward 1 the exemption would deprive at least 2,800 families from the right and protections of the Rent Stabilization ordinance.

275 E. 4th Street #590 • Saint Paul, MN • tel: 651-234-0050

Dedicated to expanding and preserving the supply of affordable housing in Minnesota and nationwide

It appears that there is some misunderstanding about the protections that exist for people who are in “affordable housing” as defined. While it is true that various federal, state, and local programs put limits on the upper end of rent increases, these limits are not based on what people are currently paying for rent, nor does it have any relationship to either individual incomes, what people can afford, or the operating costs of affordable housing. AMI is a blunt tool at best for defining what is affordable, and in a city like Saint Paul the AMI limits tell us nothing about what people in the city need to be stably housed. In part this is because the median income of Saint Paul is less than 60% of the Area Median Income. This means that over half of Saint Paul renter households are eligible for housing that is defined as “affordable” under the current iteration of the proposed ordinance. It also means that “affordable” under the barebones definition of programs like LIHTC is far out of reach for the needs of Saint Paul households. When landlords maximize their rents under programs like LIHTC – something that we are currently seeing across the region – there is no recourse for renters. There is no process to determine whether the rent increases are justified or whether the increases undermine the purpose of a program that is, in theory, supposed to provide affordable housing opportunities utilizing significant public resources.

However, beyond the overall negative impact that the exemption as currently written would have on renters in general, there are also profound fair housing implications of the exception as written. The broad exclusion of “affordable housing from rent stabilization will have a disproportionate negative impact on BIPOC renter households and people with disabilities. Because very low-income renter households are disproportionately BIPOC households, families with children, and people with disabilities, creating an exemption for “affordable housing” would have a disproportionately negative impact on housing access and opportunity for people from protected classes. According to the most recent HUD CHAS data, BIPOC households are 3.5 times as likely as white, non-Hispanic households to be renters with incomes below or equal to 50% of AMI. They are also more likely to experience severe housing cost burden, with almost all BIPOC households paying more than half of their household income for housing.

The fair housing implications of the “affordable housing” exemption as current written in 22-37 have not been the subject of a meaningful discussion at the city council. As the 8th Circuit stated in *U.S. v. City of Black Jack*, 508 F.2d 1185 (8th Cir. 1974): "Effect, and not motivation, is the touchstone, in part because clever men may easily conceal their motivations, but more importantly, because * * * whatever our law was once, * * * we now firmly recognize that the arbitrary quality of thoughtlessness can be as disastrous and unfair to private rights and the public interest as the perversity of a willful scheme."

There are three major elements to a disparate impact case: is there a disparate impact on a protected class, does the action meet a substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest, and finally could that interest be served by a practice with a less discriminatory effect.

The “affordable housing” exemption under 22-37 as currently written does not appear to meet a substantial, legitimate, non-discriminatory interest. No rationale has been provided for the blanket exclusion except general statements that owning and operating affordable housing is difficult. And yet, the same organizations that have raised concerns about increasing operating costs have not availed themselves of the rights that they have under the current ordinance to apply for an exception to the limitation on rent increases. The process that exists today allows operators of housing to increase rents above 3% due to a wide variety of factors including increased operating costs, increases in taxes, and

repair and maintenance needs. The process is not an onerous one the city has approved nearly all the requests for rent increases.

Nor do we take exception with the idea that sometimes it is necessary to increase the rents above the 3% cap – that is why the ordinance that was approved by Saint Paul voters included the right for landlords to make a “reasonable return on investment”. If there exists some disconnect between the MNOI methodology adopted by the city and the business model of landlords that are formed as nonprofits – something that has not been publicly articulated or discussed – then there should be a discussion about the methodology as applied to non-profits entities.

Alternatively, the city could create a tailored exemption that addresses specifically articulated concerns and that does not have a disparate impact on BIPOC families and people with disabilities. The city could and should explore the possibility of less discriminatory alternatives to the broad exemption that will strip over 10% of Saint Paul renter households of their rights.

New Construction of Affordable Housing

One of the arguments that has been made against removal of the affordable housing exemption or a narrowing of the affordable housing exemption is that it would prevent for-profit entities from building more affordable housing. However, affordable housing – like all other housing – would be subject to the new construction exemption. While we have grave concerns about the retroactive nature of the current version of the new construction exemption and see no legitimate purpose for stripping Saint Paul voters of their right to be protected from onerous rent increases, a forward-looking new construction exemption is a point on which reasonable people can disagree. The for profit entities that develop affordable housing do so because it has been a profitable business model and will remain a profitable business model. The benefits of accessing public resources to create affordable housing far outweigh the possibility that is the 21st year of operating a developer might have to fill out a form in order to increase their rent more than 3%.

Conclusion

We appreciate the difficult task in front of the City Council – respecting the will of Saint Paul voters and protecting the civil right of Saint Paul renters to have safe, stable, affordable, and dignified places to call home free from discriminatory barriers. The rent stabilization ordinance as adopted by Saint Paul voters has been instrumental in the housing stability of thousands of Saint Paul families. It is a tool that allows people to plan for their future, confident that even if their rents increase, they will not be priced out of their homes. As a city that cares about civil rights and equity, it is important that we remember that Saint Paul voters turned out for a reason – the promise that people can continue to call Saint Paul home.

Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Kaplan', with a long, sweeping underline.

Margaret Kaplan
President, Housing Justice Center