# Small Landlords Condemn Prince George's County Rent Control Measure - Promise Political Consequences

*SMOA, a trade group representing small landlords issued a statement condemning the passage of rent control legislation in Prince George's County, Maryland.*

UPPER MARLBORO, MD, UNITED STATES, February 28, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Small Multifamily & Rental Owners Association, a trade group representing the owners and managers of small apartment buildings and rental properties in Prince George's County, Maryland, issued a statement condemning the passage of a bill that limits rent increases to a maximum of 3% for the next year.

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>
> *Dean Hunter*

Bill CB-007-2023 An Act Concerning Rent Stabilization, was passed by the Prince George's County Council today. The bill is one of the most severe rent control measures in the Country. The ban on increases over 3% expires after 12 months unless renewed by the County Council. The measure exempts properties subject to a federal or local subsidy and those constructed less than five years ago.

"This is radical political pandering. We are exploring all legal and political options. Thousands of small landlords vote in Prince George's County. Councilmembers will soon hear from many of them", said Dean Hunter, CEO.

Hunter said it is unfair to single out housing providers as the sole industry to attack in this period of high inflation. "How can they target housing providers as the sole industry to regulate price increases in response to inflation? Restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, and all other businesses in the County are free to raise prices as they wish. Gas, supplies, labor, property taxes, and utility costs have all increased for landlords, said Hunter.

Hunter noted that the County Council approved a 6.5% increase for the Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission that took effect this year. "This bill treats housing providers worse than the sewage company", said Hunter.

Hunter said that most rental housing in Prince George's County is provided by small landlords., "There are tens of thousands of individuals who rent their single-family homes, condominiums, and townhouses. Approximately, forty percent of the multifamily buildings in the county are less than 25 units," Hunter continued.

Hunter said that small landlords are the largest source of naturally occurring affordable housing and are not the source of large rent increases. Small landlords have relationships with their tenants, and do not raise rents as much as the market would allow, he continued. "This was passed without any data to support it, just a few anecdotes. But the impact on housing providers will be real and immediate," said Hunter.


Dean Hunter, SMOA CEO

As an example, Hunter cited the fact that the 3% limitation does not give a landlord the resources to make any improvements or repairs after a tenant moves out. A landlord who rents an apartment for $1,500, will only be allowed to increase the rent by $45.00 per month, or $540 for the year. "That is not enough money to paint, buy new carpets, and appliances, and pay the workers, he said.

Hunter said that small housing providers were disproportionately harmed by the pandemic. "Small providers are not as capitalized as large corporate providers and therefore were more severely impacted by the record vacancies, delinquencies, rent increase bans, and eviction moratoriums. We are still recovering," he said.

Hunter said the measure benefits the rich at the expense of small landlords. "This overly broad limit on rent increases, without financial qualification, or even proof that a tenant needs relief, benefits the rich while harming small long time County providers," said Hunter.

Hunter said that the bill had an adverse racial equity impact. "Small housing providers, many of whom are people of color, are disparately impacted by this legislation. Many providers are selling their rental property in response to such policies thereby reducing the availability of affordable housing in the county, Hunter said.

Citing the recent decision of the Council to reverse zoning laws intended to increase transit-oriented economic development in the County, Hunter said, that there are members of the County Council who are not only anti-development but also do not support small businesses.

"We plan to bring this to the attention of property owners and other small business owners who live and vote and Prince George's County," he said.

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