

Dear Representative Mihaly,

My name is Sandy Bender, and I live in Johnson, Vt.

We've got a couple of rental houses we've poured all our money and sweat into and when one is available to rent my aim is to find the best tenants I can to rent the place. My criteria is that they take care of the place, pay the rent when it's due, no smoking, and don't disturb the neighbors. Our rents are reasonable and we take good care of our tenants, as good landlords do.

My husband bought his first building in 1965, so are not neophytes at this. Over the years, it has gotten more and more difficult to screen tenants because as I'm sure you have heard, it's much harder to get the non-paying, problem tenants out than ever before.

In this bill, page 12, line 10, recommends rent control. Seriously? As utilities, property taxes, insurance, and every maintenance expense increases we don't have an option to raise the rent to cover these things? This whole section should be taken out.

Habitability issues as defense to non-payment case. Please make sure that the tenant has followed the remedy requirements. We once had a tenant, a hoarder, who would not let us IN the apartment to fix anything, because he didn't want us to see the state it was in. You know, as well as I do, people can make up reasons their house or apartment is 'unsafe' or whatever and drag out any eviction/payment issues for a very long time.

Confidentiality of Court Eviction Records - this is a big one for me. We wouldn't be able to see if someone is in the midst of an eviction, until after judgement has been rendered? What are we then supposed to go on, as a landlord? Rent to these non payers and hope that they've mended their ways? That's very unrealistic.

I'm getting to the point that I'll have the houses sit there empty before I am forced to rent to someone I haven't been able to properly vet.

Your committee should be making it easier for landlords, to encourage us to keep doing this, instead of harder.

That's my two cents worth, thanks for reading this.

Sandy Bender
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