



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 3

## COUNCILMEMBER KSHAMA SAWANT

January 17, 2017

Dear House Speaker Frank Chopp, and members of the House Local Government Committee, Sherry Appleton, Joan McBride, David Taylor, Dan Griffey, Mia Gregerson, Strom Peterson, and Jim Walsh:

I am writing in response to HB 1082, which you are hearing in the Local Government Committee today. This bill would preemptively prohibit cities from enacting commercial rent control, which could otherwise be used to protect small businesses and local establishments from debilitating rent hikes.

Cities and towns in Washington State and around the country are suffering from skyrocketing rents spurred on by speculative real estate investing. And at the same time that it has become harder and harder for regular working people to afford a roof over their heads, thousands of small businesses are being priced out of locations where they have thrived for decades. Especially impacted are businesses owned by women, immigrants, and people of color.

HB 1082 shamelessly sides with wealthy real estate investors against small businesses, similar to what the state government did in 1981 enacting RCW 35.21.830, which bans residential rent control. At that time, legislators sided with landlords and real estate corporations against residential renters. Tens of thousands across our state have been forced into homelessness, or have stayed in their homes only with a greater and greater sacrifice. Doubling someone's rent, a not uncommon event in Seattle, should be illegal. Instead, the legislature in 1981 prohibited its prevention, on behalf of the real estate lobby.

Elected officials have a duty to represent the interests of regular working class people and small businesses, not big business and the super-rich. HB 1082 does the opposite. I urge you to reject this unjust bill, and instead use your time to finally repeal RCW 35.21.830 and allow city governments around the state to do our job and stand up for the interests of hard working and underrepresented tenants.

For your convenience, I have attached to this letter [a new draft of your bill](#), edited to correct these injustices. Please join me in representing Washington's tenants and small businesses, reject HB 1082, and repeal RCW 35.21.830.

Thank you,

Kshama Sawant