

FIGHT FOR A RENTERS' BILL OF RIGHTS!

RESIDENTIAL RENT CONTROL WITHOUT CORPORATE LOOPHOLES

There is a state law that shamefully prohibits rent control, which will need to be overturned. The City Council needs to stop dragging its feet and pass rent control without loopholes, to take effect the moment the statewide ban on rent control is lifted.

COMMERCIAL RENT CONTROL WITHOUT CORPORATE LOOPHOLES

Seattle's struggling small businesses need commercial rent control. The City Council can pass this law right now, as there are no legal obstacles.

CAP LATE RENT FEES AT \$10/MONTH

Corporate landlords often use late fees for overdue rent to gouge struggling renters for extra profit. Data shows that financial hardship is the primary reason working-class and poor renters are late on rent, and in fact, 39% of Americans say they have skipped meals in order to make housing payments. These predatory fees, commonly hundreds of dollars or more, send many renters into spiraling debt and even homelessness. This law caps late rent fees at no more than \$10/month.

SIX MONTHS' NOTICE FOR RENT INCREASES

Seattle currently requires 60 days (two months) notice for rent increases. The Seattle Renters Commission recommends 180 days notice for all rent increases.

REQUIRE LANDLORDS TO PAY ECONOMIC EVICTIONS ASSISTANCE

Landlords often force out tenants by increasing rents. Landlords must be required to pay the equivalent of 3 months' rent if they "economically evict" a tenant by raising the rent by 10% or more.

BAN WINTER EVICTIONS

This first-in-the-nation ban on winter evictions helps keep renters in their homes during the coldest months every year from December 1 through March 1.

BAN SCHOOL-YEAR EVICTIONS OF CHILDREN & PUBLIC SCHOOL WORKERS

Nine out of ten evictions in Seattle result in homelessness. Evictions and homelessness have a devastating impact on children. We won the nation's strongest, and only second, ban on school-year evictions of children and all public school workers.

CLOSE THE LOOPHOLES IN SEATTLE'S JUST CAUSE EVICTION PROTECTIONS

We won "just cause" protections for all tenants, effectively ending "no cause" evictions. Landlords are now required to offer new leases to all tenants regardless of the type of lease they have, unless the landlord can cite and justify a "just cause" for not doing so.

RIGHT TO A LAWYER FOR ALL RENTERS FACING EVICTION

All renters who face eviction will have the right to a publicly-funded attorney if they need one.

LIMIT MOVE-IN FEES & ALLOW PAYMENT PLANS

This landmark movement victory limits non-refundable fees to only those mentioned in state law, limits security deposits and non-refundable fees to no more than one month's rent, and allows tenants to pay the security deposit and last month's rent on a payment plan.

PROHIBIT RENT INCREASES IN BAD QUALITY HOUSING

Spearheaded by courageous immigrant working-class renter organizing, this law prohibits landlords from increasing rents in apartments with serious housing code violations.

REQUIRE LANDLORDS TO PROVIDE VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION TO NEW TENANTS

Nationally, studies have shown that renters, who are often forced to move frequently due to skyrocketing rents, end up voting at lower rates. Our movement won the law that requires Seattle landlords to provide new tenants with voter registration forms, to help prevent working people from being disenfranchised.

STOP DEFAULT EVICTIONS

Half of all evictions in Seattle happen by default—the court automatically evicts the renter because they were unable to fill out the paperwork to request a hearing, or did not attend the hearing. We need to stop default evictions.

STANDARD LEASE TERMS

Many leases currently use templates created by the landlord lobby, which often have outrageous terms attempting to make renters sign away their legal rights.

TRANSFERABLE RENTAL HISTORIES

The City should maintain renter histories, to allow renters to re-use background checks.

BAN THE USE OF CREDIT CHECKS

Most rental histories do not require a credit check, which has very little bearing on prospective tenant's ability to pay their rent. The Seattle Renters' Commission has proposed Seattle prohibit the use of credit checks in rental histories, calling them a form of modern redlining.



Councilmember

Kshama Sawant

@cmkshama kshama.sawant@seattle.gov 206-684-8803