



Promoting Stability through Rent Stabilization

HB 1217, sponsored by Rep. Emily Alvarado

A bill to promote housing affordability and stability for Washington renters

In 2025, Washington legislators have the opportunity to continue to lead the nation in housing policy by adopting a balanced rent stabilization policy.

Why Now?

Washington is already one of the most expensive rental markets in the country. Excessive rent increases are driving housing loss and are a significant cause of homelessness. Nearly 40% of Washington's households are renter households. Excessive rent increases are outpacing incomes, disproportionately impacting seniors, BIPOC households, and families with children. Studies show that every \$100 rent increase leads to at least a 9% increase in homelessness.

Washington's legislature has shown leadership in passing legislation to increase our state's housing supply through reform of zoning laws (HB 1220, HB 1110, HB 1337). But tackling supply alone will be insufficient in solving our state's housing crisis.

Rent Stabilization Reinforces Zoning Reform

Tenants need predictability now, but supply-based strategies will take years to affect prices due to the time it takes for new buildings to be built. Rental spikes during this waiting period make current residents vulnerable to displacement before they see the benefits from more housing supply.

Additionally, at a statewide or regional level, supply brings down prices; but at a neighborhood level many tenants are worried about gentrification when fancy new buildings are built near their homes. Rent stabilization policies help mitigate that concern by protecting existing tenants from jumps in their rent and helps to reduce local opposition to new construction.

HB 1217 Is Balanced Policy to Address Our Housing Crisis

HB 1217 is a smart policy that will cap rent increases at 7%, increase notice periods for rent increases, and limit expensive move-in fees and security deposits.

HB 1217 specifically recognizes the need to continue to increase our overall housing supply: that's why new buildings are exempted from the policy for the first ten years to ensure that developers can rely on rents to cover the costs of new development.

Included in HB 1217:

- Protects both manufactured homeowners and residential renters.
- Allows yearly rent increases of up to 7%.
- Exempts certain properties, including new construction for the first 10 years.
- Requires six months notice for all rent increases of 3% or more to provide tenants with more opportunity to plan for the increase.
- Caps all move-in fees to equivalent of one month's rent in order to make moving more affordable. Caps late fees to 1.5 percent of the tenant's total monthly rent.