

Letters-to-the-Editor Templates

Housing Affordability

To the Editor:

There's no question that [Name of City or State] is in the midst of a significant housing crisis. As of 2023, [xx] percent of households in the [City or State] were considered cost-burdened (paying over 30 percent of their income on housing costs), while [yy] percent were severely burdened (paying over 50 percent of their income on housing). The root of this problem is a lack of housing supply – estimates of the national housing shortage range anywhere from [xx] (source) to [yy] (source). The only way to attack this affordability crisis is to encourage the construction of a wide variety of housing options – including apartments, single-family homes, townhomes, and duplexes. Unfortunately, these efforts are often blocked by NIMBYs – the “Not In My Backyard” crowd – people who find one reason or another to oppose new housing in their neighborhoods.

The problem is that it's often too hard to build housing that's affordable to a wide range of income levels. When zoning laws prohibit the development of certain types of homes – like townhomes, duplexes, and apartment buildings – they make the affordability crisis worse. Additionally, red tape, overregulation and government fees add to the cost of building new housing.

We won't solve the affordability crisis by making new housing difficult to build. When we restrict the supply of housing, housing affordability for everyone suffers. New housing is a good thing, which is why our local leaders should take action to make it easier to build. The cost of inaction and of sticking our head in the sand is increasing every day. [STATE/CITY] is running out of time to put reforms in place to solve the problem. It's not rocket science – we need more housing and fewer barriers to construction.

[36.6 million](#) American households paid more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs in 2019. That is unacceptable. We need to learn from the mistakes of cities like San Francisco and New York whose antiquated rent control laws have helped create some of the highest rents in the country. Building a wider range of housing options and providing direct assistance to those with demonstrated need would be a more effective path toward improving affordability than setting a price control on rental housing.

Rent Control Specific

To the Editor:

More and more [Nevadans/Coloradans/etc.] are struggling to find housing they can afford. Although we need to address the housing crisis, rent control is not the way to go about it.

Economists of all stripes agree that rent control is [not only ineffective but also harmful](#). It reduces the supply of housing, discourages new construction, makes it harder to find an apartment and reduces property values and tax revenue for vital services, like public schools and first responders. On top of all that, rent control does nothing to make housing more affordable. In fact, it accelerates gentrification and displacement, and over time, it makes rents rise faster than they would without rent control.

Take New York and San Francisco, for example. Both these cities have had rent control for decades, and yet they are two of the most expensive cities in the country. If rent controls were effective, working-class families would not have been pushed out of these cities over the past 30 years. Unfortunately, they have been pushed out and are continuing to be pushed out. That's because rent control is a solution that doesn't solve a thing. It's a distraction from the real problem these cities face, a lack of housing supply in the face of rising housing demand.

No city can escape the basic laws of supply and demand. We should make it easier to build lots of housing of different shapes and sizes for families with different needs. We should also provide direct assistance to vulnerable families whose incomes can't cover the cost of housing. This isn't quick fix, but the only effective way to improve housing affordability in our community.