2025 RENT CONTROL BALLOT

A summary

WHAT DOES IT DO?

Seeks to repeal the 1994 law banning rent control and enact strict rent control governing most units in the Commonwealth.

NOT A MUNICIPAL OPT-IN

If passed, this proposal would impact every municipality in the Commonwealth. Local governments would have no ability to opt-out.

RENT INCREASES LIMITED TO CPI OR 5% - WHICHEVER IS LOWER

CPI has only exceeded 5% twice in the last 20 years.

APPLIES TO CALENDAR YEAR NOT TENANCY

You cannot raise the rent more than once in a 12-month period, regardless of tenancy.

BASE RENT TIED TO JANUARY 2026 RATE

The base rent is tied to the rental rate in place in January 2026 - with additional provisions if the unit just came on the market for the first time.

ANYTHING ELSE?

VIOLATIONS

Violations would be considered a violation of consumer protection laws and under the purview of the Attorney General.

NO RELIEF PATHWAY

Increased property taxes? Water and sewer go up? Electricity rates through the roof? Need to do some repairs or replace the floors after a previous tenant moved out?

There is no mechanism in place to demonstrate a landowner's increased costs and need to recoup those costs.

LIMITED EXCEPTIONS

It would not apply:

- to units in owner-occupied buildings with four or fewer units;
- units that are subject to regulation by a public authority;
- units rented to transient guests for periods of less than 14 days*;
- units operated for educational, religious, or non-profit purposes;
- or new units for first ten years.

*Airbnb in the Summer but rent by the month in the Winter? This exception may not apply.

2025 TIMELINE

September 3

Ballot Questions are certified by the Attorney General's Office.

September - November 19

Collect 74,574 signatures of registered voters.

November 19

Deadline for signatures to be turned into the local clerks' offices.

December 3

Signatures sent to Secretary of State's Office.

2026 TIMELINE

January

Secretary Galvin sends the ballot questions to the legislature for consideration.

February

Legal Challenge Filed

Spring

Legislative Hearing on ballot questions & Oral Arguments at SJC

May 5

If the Legislature fails to act, proponents gather 12,429 additional signatures.

June 17

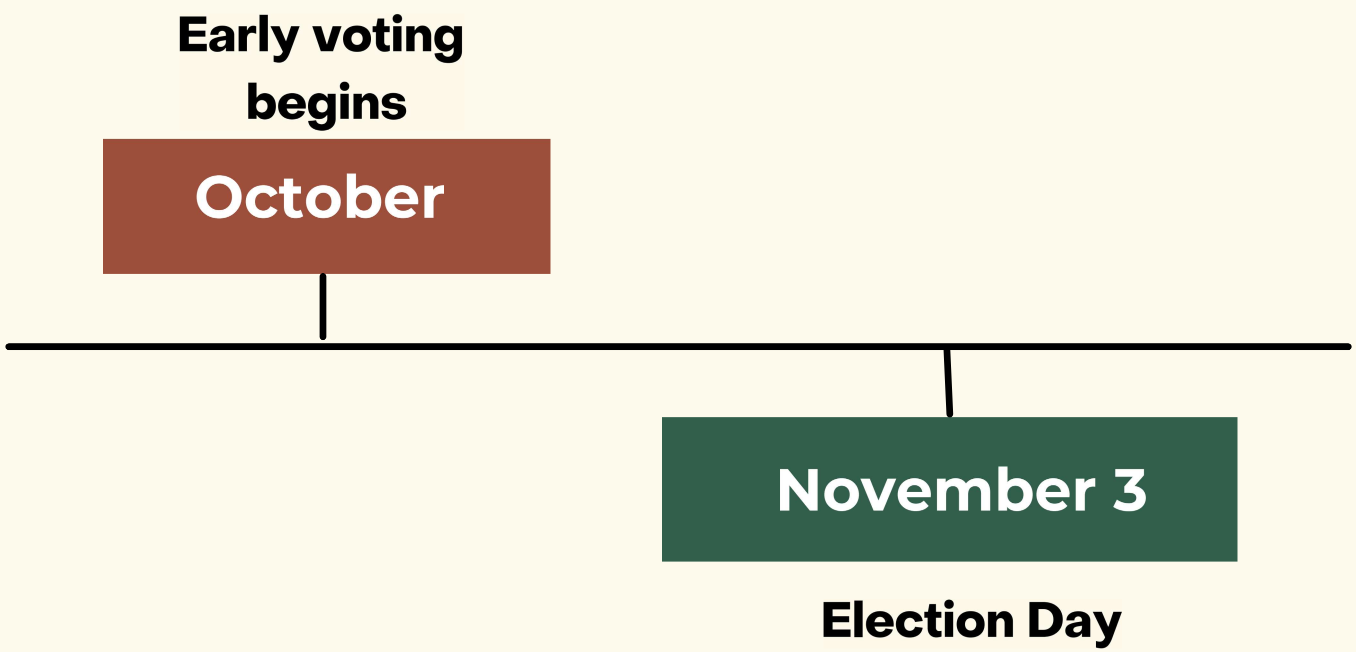
Deadline for signature collection. All signatures must be turned into the local clerk's office.

June

SJC Releases Decision

July 1

Signatures are sent to Secretary of State – ballot questions are put on the ballot.



2026 TIMELINE CONTINUED

THE HARM RENT CONTROL CAUSES

IMPACTS ON EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

A study by the Rand Corporation of Los Angeles' rent control law found that 63 percent of the benefit to consumers of lowered rents was offset by a loss in available housing due to deterioration and other forms of disinvestment

In 2024, the Census Bureau released data showing that over 26,000 regulated apartments in NYC sit vacant and off the market.

If RC was lifted in NYC, these vacant apartments could add almost a year's worth of construction to the housing supply.

Rent Control hurts existing housing and takes inventory off the market.

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IMPACTS NEW DEVELOPMENT

By forcing rents below the market price, rent control reduces the profitability of rental housing, directing investment capital out of the rental market and into other more profitable markets. Construction declines and existing rental housing is converted to other uses.

Investors are closely aligned on their desire not to invest in markets with rent control policies in place. Even with potential waivers of rent control for the first 10 years of a building's occupancy, rent regulation reduces returns to rental housing investors which means that they become less able to leverage returns into new rental units, thus the supply of rental housing is reduced.

Rent control reduces new housing supply.

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DEPRESSED PROPERTY TAX VALUES AND NO NEW DOLLARS

Taxable assessed rental property values decline relative to unregulated property.

A study of rent control in New York City calculated the loss in taxable assessed property values attributable to rent control at approximately $4 billion in the late 1980s.

These distorted assessments cost the city an estimated $370 million annually in property tax revenues.

This means...

With no new growth and a depression of residential property values, municipal budgets, which rely on property taxes, will be devastated.

WHAT DOES HELP HOUSING?

Production, Production, Production.

Massachusetts has a housing shortage.

We need 220,000 new homes in the next ten years.

Costs are up.

Median home prices have risen 73% since 2000.

New production lowers rents.

According to a PEW analysis covering homebuilding from 2017 to 2024, a 10 percent increase in a market's housing supply correlated with a 5 percent decrease in rent growth, with the steepest declines in older and less expensive units.

What works?

Construction boomed in Austin and rents went down.

In 2022, Austin broke ground on 13,000 market rate apartments. As a result of almost 10,000 new apartments coming online in the city, rents fell 6% from 2023-2024