



## City of Northampton

MASSACHUSETTS

*In the City Council, August 21, 2025*

Upon the Recommendation of:      Councilor Deborah Klemer  
   Councilor Alex Jarrett  
   Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra

**R-25.309**

### **A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF**

### **"An Act Enabling Cities and Towns to Stabilize Rents and Protect Tenants"**

**WHEREAS**, In Northampton, a city celebrated for its vibrant culture and progressive spirit, our rental market is in distress due to high demand, limited inventory, and the lack of vital protections like rent stabilization. Rental prices in our city have reached unsustainable levels, creating a deep divide and pushing out long-time residents and new arrivals alike; and

**WHEREAS**, consequently, some Northampton renters have reported that they have been victims of predatory rental market practices, which involve landlords exploiting tenants through unfair rental agreements; abrupt and significant rent hikes far beyond cost of living increases, often without adequate notice; neglect of repairs; and unfair eviction tactics. All of these practices have led to financial hardship and housing instability for Northampton's renters, have left many of our long-term renters displaced, and have put some Northampton renters in the position of choosing rent over food and utilities; and

**WHEREAS**, Northampton has made strides in the past decade in increasing housing supply, through zoning changes allowing for a wide variety of different housing types throughout the city, and has increased its stock of subsidized affordable housing with more in the pipeline. These measures, while important, don't adequately address the need for housing stability that these bills could help provide; and

**WHEREAS**, according to U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, over 21 million renter households spent more than 30% of their income on housing costs in 2023, representing nearly half (49.7%) of the 42.5 million renter households in the United States for whom rent burden is calculated<sup>1</sup>; and

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2019–2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B25070

**WHEREAS**, a 2020 report published by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO-20-433) found that every \$100 increase in median rent is associated with a 9% increase in homelessness<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the U.S. Census Bureau ACS estimates, in Northampton, median rent has increased by \$306 (28%) between 2018 and 2023<sup>3</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2023, 15% of Northampton households earned less than \$25,000 a year<sup>4</sup>, and 18%, 12%, and 16% of households are extremely low, very low, and low income, respectively, meaning that 46% of all households in Northampton qualify for federal and state affordable housing programs based on household income<sup>5</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2023, 53% of Northampton renters were housing cost-burdened, spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs, and 27% were severely cost-burdened, paying 50% or more<sup>6</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, rents in Northampton are rising, causing the city to become increasingly unaffordable for its residents, including low and fixed-income individuals, service and essential workers, working-class households, as well as other marginalized members of the community, including but not limited to people with accessibility needs, the LGBTQ+ community, people of the global majority, immigrants, and seniors. This can lead to housing displacement, lack of housing stability, and occasionally causing displacement into homelessness, creating a growing affordability and renter crisis in the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the population of Northampton is aging, with 20.5% of Northampton residents age 65 or older in 2023, an increase of 4% from 2018<sup>7</sup>, and the rising cost of living across the Commonwealth has been felt acutely in our community, especially for our low-income and senior populations; and

**WHEREAS**, stable rental environments with familiar neighbors are essential conditions for informal (unpaid) caregiving networks for older persons who wish to remain embedded within

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<sup>2</sup> "State of Homelessness", U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO-20-433).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census ACS 2014-2018 and 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B25031

<sup>4</sup> [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S2503?q=Owner/Renter+\(Tenure\)&g=160XX00US2546330](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S2503?q=Owner/Renter+(Tenure)&g=160XX00US2546330)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.housing.ma/northampton/report>

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census ACS 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates, Table B25070

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census ACS 2014-2018 and 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S0101

our community; and

**WHEREAS**, predatory investors are increasingly buying properties in Northampton in the hopes of profiting from the high-demand rental market. These investors often use corporations or LLCs, and 4.3% of residential properties are owned by corporations or LLCs as of August 2025, 37% of which were purchased since 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, the loss of affordable housing in Northampton is a crisis that deeply impacts the lives of our neighbors, colleagues, and friends; and

**WHEREAS**, the housing market should exist to provide much needed homes for Northampton residents, and not simply serve as a vehicle for generating wealth for property owners; and

**WHEREAS**, property owners who provide stable, safe, affordable and well-maintained housing, and communicate openly about rent changes based on reasonable expenses, are deeply appreciated, and are the standard that is expected; and

**WHEREAS**, the goal of rent stabilization is to address a city's affordable housing crisis by setting the maximum amount that a landlord can raise rent every year, either a fair fixed percentage or tied to the rate of inflation; and

**WHEREAS**, the current Massachusetts statute currently prohibits rent control, so that Northampton cannot address this problem without legislative action on the state level.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Mayor and the Northampton City Council support bills HD.2501 and SD.1084: "[An Act Enabling Cities and Towns to Stabilize Rents and Protect Tenants](#)," sponsored by Sen. Patricia Jehlen, Rep. David Rodgers, and Rep. Samantha Montaño, and co-sponsored by Senator Comerford and Rep. Sabadosa, to repeal rent control preemptions, enabling cities to enact rent stabilization and "Just Cause" eviction protections for tenants while building in exemptions fit for the local context; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we thank the Easthampton City Council for their resolution passed in March of 2025<sup>8</sup>, which this resolution is built upon, and encourage cities and towns throughout Massachusetts to add their voices to this urgent call; and

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<sup>8</sup> <https://easthamptonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8635/2025---Resolution-in-Support-of-an-Act-Enabling-Cities-and-Towns-to-Stabilize-Rents-and-Protect-Tenants-PDF>

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** a copy of this resolution will be sent to the sponsors and co-sponsors listed above, and Governor Maura Healey.