



Rent Stabilization 101: The Emergency Tenant Protection Act

Rent Stabilization *BY THE NUMBERS*

41

NYS municipalities already
have rent stabilization

60%

of rental units statewide are
unregulated

49%

of New York State tenants
are rent-burdened

227K

Residential Eviction Filings in
NYS in 2023

47%

of Unregulated Renters are
People of Color

Black Women are over

2+ Times

More Likely to Be Evicted
than White Tenants

*Sources: Division of Housing and
Community Renewal, Department of
Homeless Services; New York State
Unified Court System; Community Service
Society; Pratt Institute*

Our communities are stronger when everyone has stable, safe, affordable homes. Homes are the foundations of the rest of our lives: where we rest after a long day of work, raise our families, and build community with our neighbors. But to landlords, our homes are just another way to increase their profits. Across New York State, skyrocketing rents are pushing tenants out of their homes and destabilizing our communities.

We need our elected officials to confront our housing emergency by taking action to prevent unreasonable rent hikes, displacement, and evictions.

Rent control is a critical tool for cities across the state to immediately stabilize housing prices and strengthen our neighborhoods.

What is the Emergency Tenant Protection Act?

The Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA) is New York's most expansive rent control law. ETPA is a state law that enables localities to regulate rents in buildings with 6 or more units built before 1974. With rent stabilization, each year, a local Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) made up of tenant, property owner, and public representatives votes on the rate of allowed rent adjustment for eligible buildings. This system, already in place in 41 municipalities across New York State, will protect tenants from excessive rent increases while ensuring that property owners receive a fair return on their investment. Opting into the ETPA will also give tenants protections against evictions without a good cause, guarantee lease renewals, and empower them to secure repairs and maintenance.

FAQ

How will the Rent Guidelines Board decide rent adjustment rates?

Rent Guidelines Boards - made up of appointed tenant, landlord, and public representatives - hold annual hearings to listen to data and testimony from tenants and landlords. The board then votes on a rent "adjustment" rate.

What will ETPA mean for my rent?

Likely lower (or no!) rent increases than without it! New York City's rent stabilized units haven't seen increases exceed 5% in 30 years. Last year Kingston's brand new RGB passed a rent freeze.

Will this affect newly constructed housing or limit the housing supply?

NO. ETPA only affects buildings of 6 or more units built before 1974.

What Will Rent Control Do For Our Community?

Provide stability. Our homes are the foundation of our lives and communities – where we unwind after a long day at work and spend time with our families. But greedy landlords and private equity companies see our homes just as vehicles for increasing their profits. We need to come together to limit severe rent hikes and make sure everyone in this city is able to stay in their homes. Rent control will bring more stability to tenants struggling with high rents, ensuring less turnover and stronger neighborhoods.

Keep rents from outpacing our incomes. Housing costs have gone up 68% in the past decade and wages have not kept pace. Half of all New York renters are rent-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income on rent.

Stop displacement. New investment in communities that have long suffered from discriminatory redlining and economic decline is raising prices for existing residents, forcing long-time community members out of their neighborhoods. Rent control can preserve economically and racially diverse neighborhoods in the face of gentrification.

Advance racial justice. We all deserve a quality home, no matter what neighborhood we live in, where we came from, or what we look like. But decades of discriminatory housing policies have displaced Black and brown families and disrupted our communities. Rent stabilization would keep people in their homes and restore our vibrant city.

Safer neighborhoods. Rent stabilization will enable tenants to report unsafe conditions, code violations, and maintenance needs, keeping them safer and improving nearby property values. The safest communities are those where people know that they have a place to rest their head at night and where they feel at home and invested in their neighborhood.

Improve education. Frequent and forced moves year over year have a negative impact on children's social development and education. Rent stabilization will help children do better in school and have cascading benefits in our local community.

Strengthen our community. Lower housing costs will mean more disposable income for people to spend at their neighborhood stores and grow the local economy. And more stability will enable renters to participate in the civic life of their communities and increase voter participation.

History of Rent Regulation in NYS

New York City renters won the first in the nation rent regulation laws in 1920, following a wartime housing shortage and historic rent strikes. Federal and state action created the current system of rent control during World War II, which still covers buildings built before 1947. Following the deregulation of many rent controlled units and massive tenant organizing, the City of New York passed the Rent Stabilization Law (RSL) of 1969, which regulated units in buildings built after the 1947 cut-off.

Following the implementation of vacancy decontrol in 1971, which removed tens of thousands of units from regulation, the State passed the Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA), extending the regulation system of the RSL to NYC's suburbs. The 1990s saw reforms to rent stabilization that removed tens of thousands of units from regulation.

In 2019, tenants mobilizing upstate and downstate won the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act (HSTPA) which closed loopholes that enabled deregulation, including ending the vacancy bonus, limited rent increases based on major capital improvements, and removed the geographical restriction on rent stabilization – enabling municipalities around the state to opt-in to the rent stabilization system.