



**Testimony in Support of  
An Act Enabling Local Options for Tenant Protections (H.1378/S.886)**

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President & CEO  
To the  
Joint Committee on Housing**

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Chairman Arciero, Chairman Keenan, and Members of the Joint Committee, on behalf of MACDC and our members, we write to recommend passage of An Act Enabling Local Options for Tenant Protections (H.1378/S.886), filed by Reps Connolly and Elugardo and Senator Gomez.

MACDC represents all 63 state-certified Community Development Corporations in Massachusetts as well as 37 other non-profit organizations that share our mission of expanding economic opportunity. CDCs work collaboratively with residents and local governments to identify community goals and develop projects with strong local support. In 2020, our members built or preserved 1,043 homes and they had another 1,826 homes in construction at the beginning of last year. These include both rental and homeownership housing and serve a range of incomes and households, from seniors to families to people with disabilities. CDC projects also include new construction, preservation and increasingly acquisition projects where our members purchase existing homes to stabilize and preserve them for long-term affordability. CDCs also own and manage over 18,000 rental apartments across the state.

This Committee knows better than most that Massachusetts faces an extraordinary housing crisis – a crisis made even worse by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic dislocation. We thank you for all the work that you have done with your colleagues in the Legislature and the Administration to establish special tenant protections and rental assistance programs that have helped to dramatically reduce evictions over the past 18 months compared to the number of evictions prior to March 2020. Thanks to your efforts, thousands of families have been able to remain in their homes.

At the same time, we know that the housing crisis was a problem long before COVID-19 and it will likely remain a problem for years to come unless we implement a comprehensive and ambitious set of solutions.

We believe An Act Enabling Local Options for Tenant Protections should be one piece of that comprehensive approach.

The bill enables local rent stabilization and tenant protections. It doesn't require these protections or prescribe the details of these protections for any given community — instead, it repeals the preemptive provisions of Ch. 40P, thereby allowing our municipal officials to bring everyone to the table — that means renters, homeowners, and landlords alike — to consider tenant protections that make sense on the local level.

The bill allows for a municipality, by vote of its local elected body, to adopt any of the following measures:

- Rent Stabilization
- Just Cause Eviction Protections
- Notification of Rights and Resources
- Regulation of up-front lease fees (e.g. Brokers' Fees or payment plans for first/last/security)
- Anti-price gouging protections while regulations are being implemented

The bill also explicitly exempts small, owner-occupant landlords from any rent regulation. In addition, it empowers municipalities to craft broader exemptions as they deem fit or to specify that certain protections will only apply in specific anti-displacement zones.

MACDC is also supportive of many of the other ideas before the committee today and we urge the legislature to adopt a robust set of tenant protections this year, including Tenant Opportunity Purchase legislation, Right to Counsel legislation, Eviction Sealing and other steps to address the eviction and displacement crisis. MACDC also supports Boston's Home Rule Petition, An Act to Restore Boston's Governmentally Involved Housing Protection (H.4229) which would help alleviate the expiring use crisis in the City of Boston.

Thank you for your consideration.