



## ***CITY OF EASTHAMPTON*** **OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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### **Easthampton City Council Resolution in Support of “An Act Enabling Cities and Towns to Stabilize Rents and Protect Tenants”**

Over the last decade, the Easthampton City Council has borne witness to an explosive rise in housing costs. In an environment where demand for both owner-occupied and rental housing far outstrips supply, landlords have disproportionate market power over their tenants.

As a result of this dynamic, many Easthampton renters have reported to this Council that they have been victims of predatory rental market practices, which involve landlords exploiting tenants through unfair rental agreements, abrupt rent hikes, neglect of repairs, and unfair eviction tactics. All of these practices have led to financial hardship and housing instability for Easthampton’s renters, have left many of our long-term renters displaced, and have put some Easthampton renters in the position of choosing rent over food and utilities.

WHEREAS, the Easthampton City Council is calling on the Commonwealth to pass 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 Montañó, 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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> “State of Homelessness”, U.S. Government Accountability Office ([GAO-20-433](#)).

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau ACS estimates, in Easthampton, median rent has increased by \$209 (21%) between 2018 and 2023;<sup>3</sup> and

WHEREAS, in 2023, 26% of Easthampton Households earned less than \$25,000 a year,<sup>4</sup> and 13%, 16%, and 17% of households are extremely low, very low, and low income, respectively, meaning that 46% of all households in Easthampton qualify for federal and state affordable housing programs based on household income;<sup>5</sup> and

WHEREAS, in 2023, 43% of Easthampton renters were housing cost-burdened, spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs, and 11% were severely cost-burdened, paying 50% or more;<sup>6</sup> and

WHEREAS, rents in Easthampton 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, LGBT+, people of the global majority, immigrants, and seniors, leading to housing displacement, lack of housing stability, and sometimes into unhoused situations, creating a growing affordability and renter crisis in the community; and

WHEREAS, the population of Easthampton is aging, with 24% of Easthampton residents age 65 or older in 2023, an increase of 5% 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 our community; and

WHEREAS, predatory investors are increasingly buying properties in Easthampton in the hopes of profiting from the high-demand rental market, with 3% of residential properties being owned by corporations or LLCs as of February 2025, 46% of which were purchased since 2020;<sup>8</sup> and

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

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census ACS 2019–2023 5-Year Estimates, Table S2503

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.housing.ma/easthampton/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

<sup>8</sup> Analysis of Feb 2025 property tax parcel data from [MassGIS](#)



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

WHEREAS, the housing market should provide much-needed housing for the city, not be used as an asset for outside investors to extract wealth from the Easthampton community; 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 Easthampton cannot address this problem without legislative action on the state level;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Easthampton City Council supports Bill HD.2501 and SD.1084, calling for the repeal of statewide rent control preemptions, allowing cities and towns to institute rent stabilization measures and implement tenant protections; and a copy of this resolution will be sent to State Representative Homar Gómez and State Senator John Velis.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of March, 2025.

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In accordance with Section 3-7 of the Easthampton Home Rule Charter, the following order, resolution or vote adopted by the City Council is presented to the Mayor for approval:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_