

The Rent Mandate Ballot Question

Fact Check

Activists are pushing a 2026 ballot question that would repeal a law passed by Massachusetts voters and impose one of the nation's most restrictive and damaging statewide rent mandate agendas across ALL 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. They make a number of false claims about their proposal, so let's do a quick Fact Check.

Myth #1

The ballot question caps rent increases at 5%.

FACT: This ballot question limits rent increases to the annual change in CPI, which averages 2.5%. That is the real rent mandate.

Property owner costs growing much faster than CPI: In 2025 alone, Massachusetts property taxes increased an average of 5.1%. From 2018-2023, home insurance premiums in Massachusetts jumped 22.8%.

This question provides no pathway for property owners to recover the costs of upgrades or renovations: As one rent mandate supporter told the media last year, "If [property owners] find themselves in a position where they can't maintain their properties, they don't really have an out except for basically condemning them..."

Myth #2

This ballot question allows cities and towns the choice to opt out of rent mandates.

FACT: This ballot question imposes rent mandates in all 351 cities and towns in Mass. There is no opt-in or opt-out.

One-size-fits-all: Rent mandates would be automatically imposed in all 351 Massachusetts communities, from Cape Cod to Boston to the Berkshires, regardless of individual community needs or wants.

Strips local control from cities and towns: As one State Senator, *generally supportive of rent mandates*, said at a recent hearing, "In the district I represent...are certainly some communities that would like to institute rent control...There are also many that don't... And I do think that often communities at the local level have that best discretion." That's not what this question allows.

Myth #3

This ballot question is "revenue neutral."

FACT: This ballot question would cut property values across Massachusetts by \$300 billion over ten years - forcing cities and towns to cut services or raise taxes on homeowners.

A strain on property values and municipal budgets: A 2026 study from the Tufts Center for State Policy Analysis found that this rent mandate ballot question would shrink the residential property tax base by anywhere from 6-9% in municipalities across the Commonwealth.

A 14% drop in local revenue: These effects would be permanent, and amount to a sustained loss of investment for homeowners and a durably shrunken tax base to fund schools, police, fire departments, and municipal services that communities rely on.

[View all citations and learn more at www.housingformass.com](http://www.housingformass.com)

Paid for by Housing for Massachusetts.

Myth #4

The ballot question “supports small landlords.”

FACT: A person or family who rents out even just one or two units in a house or small building that they own but don't live in will be subject to this law—treated the same way as if they were a Wall Street hedge fund with 10,000 apartments.

Small landlords will be devastated: The ballot question only exempts buildings of 4 units or fewer that are OWNER-OCCUPIED. Small property owners, who account for more than 60% of all rentals in MA, will not be able to invest in their properties or even keep up with rising costs.

“Pushing small landlords towards extinction”: As the *Wall Street Journal* reported in March, similar policies in New York are leading “giant multifamily firms [to] take over more New York City apartments while mom-and-pop landlords struggle to stay afloat.”

Myth #5

This ballot question “encourages housing production.”

FACT: Investors and developers are already pulling out of Massachusetts. Governor Maura Healey opposes this ballot question explicitly because it is ALREADY leading to less housing production in the state.

We have seen this in MA before: When Massachusetts had rent mandates the first time, the City of Cambridge lost 2500 units of “renter occupied housing” in just ten years. In the three years after rent mandates were repealed, the Boston area rental market gained 15,000 more rental units than it would have had if the mandates had stayed in place.

Other states have seen the same result: In St. Paul, MN, rent mandates led to a 79% drop in new construction, while Minneapolis, with no mandates, continued to grow. In Montgomery Co., MD, new multifamily permits fell from 2093 in 2024 to just 54 in 2025 after rent mandates, even as the rest of the state built more housing.

Myth #6

This ballot question will make housing more affordable for everyone.

FACT: This ballot question will force property owners to raise rents to the maximum every year, slow the creation of new housing, reduce maintenance, and limit turnover - all of which will lead to fewer rental options, lower quality, and rents that always increase.

No vacancy decontrol: Under this measure, vacant units remain under the rent mandate law: meaning that property owners can never reset to market, forcing them to raise rents to the maximum allowed every year just to pay their bills and protect the value of their property.

Rent mandates are a failed policy and a step back in time: Study after study finds that rent mandate policies have negative implications for communities and do not deliver on the promises of progressives. Massachusetts has already been down this road, and voters across the state voted to ban rent mandates because they don't work.

Get the Facts and Vote No on Rent Mandates

Housing for Massachusetts is a coalition of Massachusetts citizens, small property owners, family-owned real estate companies, affordable housing developers, and housing advocates. We aim to educate and advocate for policies that support housing creation in Massachusetts, improving availability and affordability for all.



[View all citations and learn more at www.housingformass.com](http://www.housingformass.com)

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