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Begin forwarded message:

From: Doug Goldsmith <dgoldsmithvt@gmail.com>
Subject: Proposed Charter Change - "no-cause evictions"
Date: September 28, 2020 at 4:17:36 PM EDT
To: jshannon@burlingtonvt.gov
Cc: "Rose, Gail" <grosevt@gmail.com>

[WARNING]: External Message

Joan -

I became aware of the effort to change the charter regarding tenant leases and whether the expiration of a lease would be "cause" for a landlord to ask a tenant to vacate the tenancy.

My wife and I own a rental house in the south end. It was the first house we owned together and when we needed more space, we found a way to buy our new new house (also in the south end) and keep the old house as a rental. That was almost 20 years ago and it has been a good investment for us and I believe, has provided good housing for 10 or so different tenants. We've never once had to evict a tenant for any reason and I think I've returned 100% of security deposits with the exception of a \$50 charge for a damaged door. Bottom line is I feel we've done a good job as landlords and been respectful and fair with tenants.

It does bother me that, if this change is made, my control over my home (it may be a rental but I think of it and maintain it as my home) would be significantly limited by being forced to have tenants live there as long as they like regardless of the termination date of the lease. While I've never asked a tenant to leave at the end of a lease date, it is comforting to know that I currently have control over the tenancy. In fact, my wife and I have talked about moving back into that home when we downsize one day. With this charter change, I would be forced to rent to my tenants forever (if they choose) provided they do not breach other provisions of the lease that would be considered 'cause'.

I also wonder how rent increases will be handled with the proposed changes? If tenants can stay as long as they like, will rent increases be limited as a landlord could use a large rent increase to effectively push a tenant out. If there are limits on rent increases, how would they be determined - indexed to tax increases and insurance increases, cost of debt, comps for similar units? A fixed, statutory limit (say 3%) doesn't work considering all the changing variables that go into a

landlord's determination of rent and I think if rent increases are fixed, it would make me more likely to raise rent every time I could knowing I'm limited each year (I often don't raise rent except when my house is turned over). I think there are many add-on issues surrounding these proposed changes that are very challenging to get right without unintended consequences.

I completely understand that there are some landlords that could be considered bad actors. I also suspect that there are very few landlords who like tuning over a property and the strong preference is to have tenants who respect the property, the neighbors and pay the rent - so if the tenants are living up to the deal, I have to think landlords would want them to stay. Please don't use such a broad change as this to try to fix the bad landlords. I think you'll ultimately end up with the good landlords selling their rental homes in Burlington and you'll have a larger share of bad landlords.

I urge you to dig in and really understand how large this problem is and whether there are better ways to accomplish your goals.

Finally, I truly do appreciate your service on the Council and for working to make Burlington an even better place for all residents.

Doug Goldsmith
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