**California Rent Control Bill Dies in Assembly Judiciary Committee**

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Authored by Assemblymembers Ash Kalra (D–San Jose) and Lola Smallwood-Cuevas (D–Los Angeles), [**Assembly Bill (AB) 1157**](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1157) -- known as the Affordable Rent Act -- failed last week to advance out of the Assembly Judiciary Committee, marking the second consecutive year the rent control proposal has been halted in the Legislature.

The bill received four “yes” votes from Democrats and three “no” votes from Republican members, while five other Democrats on the committee abstained. The legislation required seven votes to advance out of committee.  
  
Had AB 1157 passed, the bill would have expanded tenant protections under the California Tenant Protection Act of 2019, also known as AB 1482.

“This is a cost to humanity,” Kalra told the Assembly Judiciary Committee on Jan. 13. “I think there’s a far greater cost for our humanity and for us not understanding that we need to do more to help those struggling the most.”

Assemblymember and member of the California Legislative Black Caucus Isaac Bryan (D-Ladera Heights) voted in favor of AB 1157. Assemblymembers Kalra, Damon Connolly (D-San Rafael), and John Harabedian (D-Pasadena) also voted “yes.”

Assemblymembers Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D–Orinda), Blanca Pacheco (D–Downey), Diane Papan (D–San Mateo), Catherine Stefani (D–San Francisco), and Rick Chavez Zbur (D–West Hollywood) abstained from voting, preventing AB 1157 from reaching the seven-vote threshold required for passage.

Diane Dixon (R-Newport Beach), Alexandra Macedo (R-Tulare), and Kate Sanchez (R-Rancho Santa Margarita) voted against the bill.

Without further hearings scheduled, AB 1157 is considered dead for the current legislative push.

A day before the vote, a rally was held on the West Steps of the State Capitol in Sacramento with a crowd that included tenants and advocates who shared personal stories and urged lawmakers to pass the measure.

Smallwood-Cuevas and Kalra joined supporters from the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE), People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO), landlords of apartment complexes, and other low-rent housing advocates at the event.

Smallwood-Cuevas, a member of CLBC, argued the bill would strengthen statewide protections to prevent the "excessive rent hikes" currently impacting millions of California renters. She shared that she is a renter of a two-bedroom apartment in Sacramento, where she started paying $2,100 per month last year. She now pays $800 more each month.

“No one should be forced to choose between paying rent and meeting basic needs,” Smallwood-Cuevas said. “Protecting people means protecting our housing. Capping rent means the bottom line of every Californian: Human rights is housing.”

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According to the [**California Housing Partnership**](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__hpri.usc.edu_wp-2Dcontent_uploads_2024_08_Tenant-2DProtections-5FHPRI.pdf-23-3A-7E-3Atext-3DPreventing-2520residential-2520evictions-2520is-2520the-2520most-2520cost-252Deffective-2Cby-2520only-25207-2525-2520-28California-2520Housing-2520Partnership-252C-25202024-29.&d=DwMFaQ&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=C0bOnd207F99SFw-0e0P-_0YoovOIF4XJSA414HHrZ8&m=JOHYpSH60xdGN8wVIMrw3Zj2X-oISYpYBbPI0yvW6plerqhDNlifQVdlHaM0Upyg&s=MU9ewMUgZ7WaWU1I4gYLXXdPc6nEt-OxVq_Y7OvgJGc&e=)**,** California remains one of the most expensive and least “renter-friendly” states in the U.S. due to cost and availability. Median rents in the state are approximately 38% higher than the national average. Four of the 10 most expensive large cities for tenants in the country are located in California.

According to the [**Bay Area Equity Atlas**](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.bayareaequityatlas.org_research_projects_black-2Din-2Dthe-2Dbay_homeownership-23-3A-7E-3Atext-3DAs-2520of-25202020-252C-2520the-2520Bay-2Cover-252010.5-2520percent-2520in-25202020.&d=DwMFaQ&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=C0bOnd207F99SFw-0e0P-_0YoovOIF4XJSA414HHrZ8&m=JOHYpSH60xdGN8wVIMrw3Zj2X-oISYpYBbPI0yvW6plerqhDNlifQVdlHaM0Upyg&s=1sHc3eSQqfOlMG1ogvcoP0po1_RHWkf_7bW9ZH0kPTA&e=)(BAEA), the Bay Area’s regionwide housing crisis affects the majority of residents but is especially detrimental to Black homeowners, renters, and prospective homebuyers.

According to BAEA,[**between 2010 and 2020, the Bay Area lost over 5,000 Black owner-occupied households**](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.bayareaequityatlas.org_research_projects_black-2Din-2Dthe-2Dbay_homeownership-23-3A-7E-3Atext-3DBlack-2520household-2520assets.-2D-2CFindings-2C-252C-2520by-2520tenure-252C-25202010-252D2020&d=DwMFaQ&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=C0bOnd207F99SFw-0e0P-_0YoovOIF4XJSA414HHrZ8&m=JOHYpSH60xdGN8wVIMrw3Zj2X-oISYpYBbPI0yvW6plerqhDNlifQVdlHaM0Upyg&s=0SwvazPOyVmBH4nrFUcP7r17Rk4CQhRz42K8MEdwvHA&e=). During that period, many Black renters and homeowners were displaced from historically Black communities to other parts of the region, particularly the inland East Bay and Solano County.

Real estate owner advocates such as the California Apartment Association (CAA), California Association of Realtors (C.A.R.), and other housing industry associations opposed AB 1157.

They argued it would increase costs, deter investment, reduce housing supply, and hurt small landlords. The opponents explained that California voters have consistently rejected similar rent control policies at the ballot box, most recently with Proposition (Prop) 33 in 2024.

Prop. 33 was defeated by a significant margin, with 62% of voters casting a “no” vote.

Debra Carlton with the California Apartment Association told the Judiciary Committee that AB 1157 would “make financing of rental housing more difficult.”

“Financing is already hard due to high interest rates and, of course, extremely high construction costs. AB 1157 further complicates this by deterring investment,” Carlton said. “It imposes rent caps without offering any corresponding control over rising insurance costs, fees at the local level, and maintenance costs for rental property owners who continue to maintain their housing.”

Carlton continued, “If you want to outsmart the market, build more housing and allow rentals to be constructed, and allow tenants to live closer to their work and their jobs.”