

## OPINION

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# Eviction legislation should be rejected

### State bill would hurt homeowners and prevent creation of affordable housing

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Special essay

Long Island is in desperate need of multifamily and affordable housing. No one on either side of the political aisle can reasonably challenge this stark reality but the issue is being held hostage by political extremists in Albany.

Much of their agenda is not only contrary to what centrists seek but is repugnant to many in our region, as it includes an anti-economic development agenda. That strategy killed off Amazon's plan for a corporate headquarters in Queens, denying the NYC-LI region 25,000 jobs — an economic loss that will be felt for generations.

Another example of this regressive-progressive agenda is the so-called "Good Cause Eviction" legislation. The bill would prevent individual property owners from increasing rent as they see fit to keep up with their own costs, ending the basic rights of property ownership. The bill caps in-

creases at either 3% or one-and-a-half times the Consumer Price Index, whichever is higher. However, members of our respective organizations — many of whom are involved in building and maintaining housing all over Long Island — say costs associated with owning a rental property here have skyrocketed in the past few years, largely due to such rising costs as taxes, utilities, insurance, payroll, and maintenance.

Contrary to the belief of the bill's supporters, not all properties are owned by large corporations. Many — especially on Long Island — belong to people who grew up in their communities, lived in them for their whole lives, and who now use their homes as their primary source of income (as well as their primary residence).

These small owners would be decimated by a rental cap of this magnitude and many — unfortunately — would have no choice but to sell.

Equally draconian, "Good Cause Eviction" would only



The State Legislature's "Good Cause Eviction" bill would prevent individual property owners from increasing rent as they see fit.

permit property owners to evict or deny a lease renewal under very rare circumstances and only with a judge's approval. As long as someone continues to pay rent, they cannot be removed from the property. If that tenant is abusive or threatening, there is no recourse until they actually harm an individual.

Let's be clear: Eviction is extremely rare when a tenant pays the rent in full and on-

time, and is a good tenant. However, there are instances where a property owner needs to deny a lease renewal to make massive improvements to the property. "Good Cause Eviction" would rob a property owner of the right to do so. If that happens, apartments all over Long Island would eventually fall into disrepair, creating problems for landlords and tenants alike and reducing the already small inventory of

affordable housing in the region.

While we have made some progress in building multifamily housing, Long Island dramatically lags in diverse housing options compared to neighboring regions. As it stands, financial institutions are reluctant to invest in our region due to restrictive zoning codes, high taxes, NIMBYism, and the significant time and costs of securing municipal approvals.

The "Good Cause Eviction" bill would make attracting investment capital for housing nearly impossible and prevent creation of the multifamily and affordable housing everyone agrees is so desperately needed — grievously harming a new generation of Long Islanders who seek access to a robust and growing economy. Should state lawmakers continue to pass the agenda of the far left, election results on Long Island in 2022 could very well mimic 2021.

■ **THIS GUEST ESSAY** reflects the views of Kyle Strober, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island, and Mitchell Pally, chief executive of the Long Island Builders Institute.