



# Office of City Clerk

## City Council Document Tracking Sheet

City Hall  
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**Matter ID:** R2023-0004242

**Meeting Date:** 9/13/2023

**Sponsor(s):** Sigcho-Lopez (25) \*

**Type:** Resolution

**Title:** Call on Illinois General Assembly to rescind state-wide preempting of rent control laws

**Committee Assignment:** Committee on Housing and Real Estate

## RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO LIFT THE BAN ON RENT CONTROL

**WHEREAS**, There is a well-documented and severe shortage of safe, affordable, and healthy rental housing in the City of Chicago. Over half of all Chicago households are renters and this crisis of affordability is especially acute for Chicago's hundreds of thousands of lower-income renters; and

**WHEREAS**, The rate at which rents have increased in Chicago has continued to outpace the increase in Chicagoans' real wages, resulting in an increasing rent burden borne by Chicago households. This growing burden threatens the quality and stability of housing available to Chicago tenants; and

**WHEREAS**, Many Chicago households who depend on rental housing are low-income and rent-burdened, meaning that they pay more than 30% of their income on rent. Some of these households are severely cost-burdened, with more than 50% of their income devoted to paying rent, leaving little for other household necessities such as health care, food, education, vocational training, transportation, or utilities. With Chicago's inflation rate reaching a 40-year high in June 2022, cost-burdened renters are increasingly forced to choose between rent and basic necessities; and

**WHEREAS**, According to a WBEZ analysis of Zillow rental data, from January 2021 to May 2023, the average rent in Cook County grew by 25%. Meanwhile, the minimum wage in Chicago and Cook County rose by just 10% and 3%, respectively, during the same period; and

**WHEREAS**, According to a recent analysis conducted by the Institute for Housing Studies at DePaul University, roughly 51% of Chicago's renter households were cost-burdened in 2021. For the lowest-income renters, 88.6% of households were cost-burdened, with the vast majority of these renters considered severely cost-burdened; and

**WHEREAS**, A March 2023 study from the National Low Income Housing Coalition shows that minimum-wage earners in Chicago need to work nearly two full-time jobs in order to afford rent for a modest two-bedroom apartment; and

**WHEREAS**, An inability to find affordable housing negatively impacts tenants' economic stability, health and wellbeing, and capacity to participate in their communities. A lack of stable housing may limit a parent's ability to maintain employment, a child's capacity to succeed at school, and, for lower-income families, potential to escape the cycle of poverty; and

**WHEREAS**, Tenants' inability to find and retain affordable housing results in increased rates of involuntary displacement, eviction, and property turnover, creating additional burdens for landlords and property owners, social service agencies, local governments, and the judicial system, as well as renter households; and

**WHEREAS**, The affordability crisis is a main driver of the growing number of evictions that Chicago residents experience every year; and

**WHEREAS**, Though tens of thousands of evictions were avoided during the height of the pandemic, the number of evictions filed and enforced has largely returned to pre-pandemic

levels. In 2022, 29,000 evictions were filed—just 300 fewer than the total for 2019. In May 2023, more than 800 tenant households were evicted, representing the highest number of evictions enforced in a single month by the Cook County Sheriff’s Office in the last four years; and

**WHEREAS**, Evictions increase poverty, disrupt education, cause and exacerbate mental health issues, and accelerate the cycle of homelessness in Chicago. Evictions disproportionately harm families, seniors, people with disabilities, and housing headed by Black women with young children. In Cook County, roughly half of all evictions happen in majority-Black ZIP codes, a pre-pandemic disparity that continues to persist; and

**WHEREAS**, The affordability crisis is also a fair housing issue. Those in need of affordable housing and those who live in areas of concentrated poverty are disproportionately people of color and members of other protected classes. The rapid rise in rental rates serves to further entrench historic patterns of segregation in Chicago and Cook County. Housing affordability pressure also leads to out-migration of vulnerable residents as they seek more affordable places to live; and

**WHEREAS**, Racial and economic segregation hampers the quality of life and economic strength of the region. In a 2017 report, the Metropolitan Planning Council demonstrated that reducing levels of economic and racial segregation in Chicago to the national median could lead to an increase in annual income for African Americans of nearly \$3,000 per person per year, an increase in the regional gross domestic product of \$8 billion, a 30% drop in the homicide rate, and 83,000 more individuals with bachelor’s degrees in the region.

**WHEREAS**, 50 ILCS 825/5 states that a unit of local government “shall not enact, maintain, or enforce an ordinance or resolution that would have the effect of controlling the amount of rent charged for leasing private residential or commercial property”; and

**WHEREAS**, 50 ILCS 825/10 states that home rule units “may not regulate or control the amount of rent charged for leasing private residential or commercial property”; and

**WHEREAS**, Courts have interpreted 50 ILCS 825/10 broadly, invalidating attempts by the Chicago City Council to respond to aspects of the affordability crisis. For example, the First District Appellate Court of Illinois struck down the Keep Chicago Renting Ordinance because it contained a provision that allowed banks to avoid paying relocation assistance if they agreed to limit rent increases for tenants renting foreclosed properties. The Court held that including this incentive constituted an impermissible form of rent control; and

**WHEREAS**, The statewide preemption of rent control hinders the City of Chicago’s ability to effectively respond to the affordability crisis, which impacts hundreds of thousands of Chicago residents. Despite implementing numerous public programs and policies designed to preserve and expand affordable housing, the force of the private market continues to drive a decline in housing affordability. This results in reduced housing choice for low-income renters, who are disproportionately racial minorities and people with disabilities; and

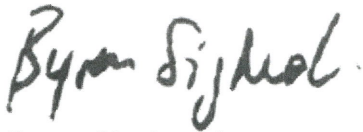
**WHEREAS**, Many other U.S. cities have preserved affordability and mitigated the fair housing impacts of rent increases through rent stabilization policies, including some of the country’s largest cities, like New York City, Newark, Washington, D.C., Oakland, San Francisco, San Jose, and Los Angeles; and

**WHEREAS**, Chicagoans' human rights depend on adequate, affordable housing for all, and the statewide preemption of rent control makes unavailable an effective tool for municipalities seeking to address the affordability crisis. It is time for more effective policies; **NOW THEREFORE**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, The Chicago City Council strongly urges the Illinois General Assembly to introduce and enact legislation rescinding the statewide preemption of rent control laws; **THEREFORE**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, The Chicago City Council believes the citizens of Chicago should have the right to choose to enact a rent control policy, and is prepared to enact such legislation; **THEREFORE**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That suitable copies of this resolution be sent to House Speaker Emanuel Chris Welch, Senate President Don Harmon, and Governor JB Pritzker.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Byron Sigcho-López". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Byron Sigcho-López  
25<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman