



CAP THE RENT MOVEMENT

Center for Leadership and Justice

Who are we?

Class of 2026 Community Action Gateway Members

Makayla Cervantes


Luke Izzo

Annie Liu

Jackson Stein

Makayla and Luke are Connecticut residents, giving perspective on changing attitudes

Annie and Jackson took their knowledge of the current Housing Market to figure out the ways in which local New England Residents are being taken advantage of.



Who is Our Partner?

- Young Men's Missionary Society was established in 1850
 - Later changed to the Christian Activities Council and now the Center for Leadership and Justice (CLJ)
 - Established for the poor and immigrants in Hartford
- Mission and purpose: to train and support leaders who work collectively for social justice
 - Respond to social issues, develop new strategies, create programs and nonprofit organizations
- Accomplishments
 - Established the first kindergarten in Hartford
 - Started the Newington Children's Hospital
 - Established congregate home for elderly
 - Support universal healthcare in Connecticut
 - Created 200+ units of affordable housing



**CENTER for
LEADERSHIP
& JUSTICE**

Understanding our Community Partner

According to our data, the average rent in several Connecticut counties has increased dramatically between 2020 and 2022. With a staggering 26% growth, New London County leads the pack, followed by Tolland County at 25%. Rent increase has also plagued New Haven County, Middlesex, Hartford, Fairfield, and Litchfield.

- US Census Bureau: Rent has risen by 3% in the last decade.
 - Housing costs (including rent) account for one-third of the computation used to determine inflation; thus, the two are intimately linked.
 - Since 2001, the national median rent has risen by 17.9%.
 - The median renter household income has only increased by 3.2%
 - Rent increased by 15% between 2001 and 2017-2021, but renters' median family income declined by 13%.
 - Connecticut also lost 9.4% of its low-income housing units (rents under \$600) between 2011 and 2019.
-

Background Information on Rent and Housing in CT:

Fair Market Rent in CT as of 2022: **\$1,446 for a 2 Bedroom Apartment**

Without paying over 30% of income:

- A household must earn **\$4,818 monthly/ \$57,820 annually**
- If working usual 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this would necessitate **\$27.80/h**

Economic Inequality within CT represented in rentals

MOST EXPENSIVE:

Stamford-Norwalk Area: \$42.88

MOST INEXPENSIVE:

Windham County: \$21.35

Why is Rent a Problem?

LACK OF AFFORDABILITY:

- Current Minimum Wage : 40 hrs / 52 weeks:
 - 14/hr and 29,120/yr
 -
- Demonstrated Increase of households paying more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities
 - 2000 : 37%
 - 2017-2021 : 51%

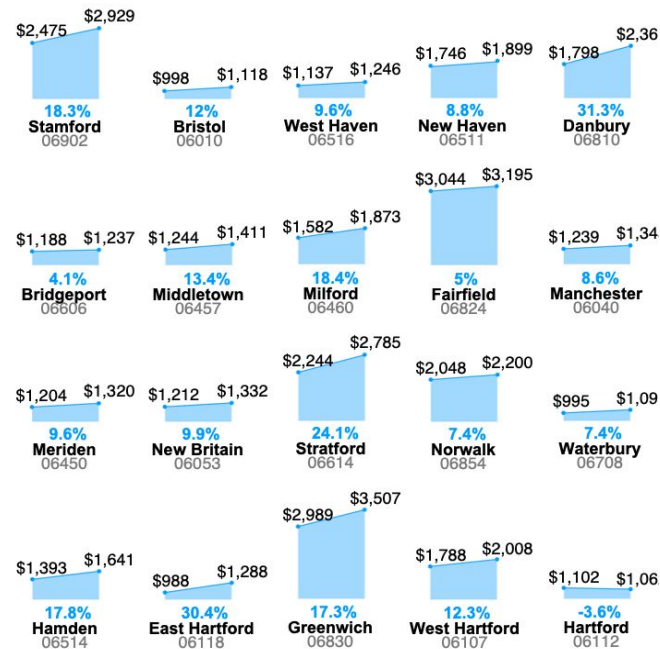
HOMELESSNESS INCREASE

- Homelessness up 13% from 2021 to 2022

SNOWBALLING PROBLEM

- 3% year rent increase from last year alone, compared to an annual rent increases in CT over the 2010s of only ~2.1%

Change in rent prices for select Connecticut ZIP codes in past two years



Source: CoStar

'Cap The Rent' Campaign

- Social issues
 - Black, Latine, and poor and working-class renters are disproportionately impacted by rent increases
 - Lead to evictions and homelessness
 - Families forced to choose between food, shelter, and medical care
- CT Tenant Unions, CT DSA, Connecticut Fair Housing Center, and GHIAA partnered to fight for a 3% rent cap across the State
 - California and Oregon established rent caps, which allowed rent stabilization for 200 municipalities
- We need legislations to stabilize and control rent and prevent predatory rent increases



Initial Work Plan

Our Mission: Our goal is to provide the Center for Justice and Leadership with quantitative and qualitative research regarding the issue of rent control. We will support their campaign with rent control by forming a digital data map of Connecticut that helps supporters better visualize the information regarding rents in each city.

Secondary Objectives:

- Gain knowledge on collecting testimonies and using such data for a public hearing
- Use quantitative data to put together research paper to assist organization's narrative
- Create an interactive rent map of each town in Connecticut

Action One: Qualitative Research on Collecting Testimonies for Hearings

Part Two: Outreaching for Testimonies for Public Hearings

Part Three: Analyze and Code Google Form Responses

Action Two: Quantitative Research Paper

Action Three: Data Visualization



RESEARCH PROCESS

Background Research- understanding the organization



ABOUT US WHAT WE DO CAMPAIGNS NEWS CONTACT 



- CLJ's website
- News articles related to CLJ
- Reports in past years regarding rent issues in Hartford and CT

CURRENTLY

The work around No More Slumlords, today, takes 2 different forms. First, part of the organizing win in 2019 the City of Hartford updated their [Housing Code](#) for the first time in 40 years. CLJ organizers are holding city officials accountable for these agreed upon changes to ensure that every apartment in Hartford is inspected and licensed for the protection of every resident.

Secondly, organizers continue to work with community leaders to demand that landlords care for their properties. This includes maintaining common areas, responding to needed repairs, pest control remediation, and more. The Center for Leadership and Justice considers safe housing to be a human right and landlords who seek to profit off of the basic needs of others need to make sure that their duties that come with that profit become their responsibilities and how they

Background Research- 'No More Slumlords' campaign

- News articles from 2018, 2019 and 2020 on the No More Slumlords movement across Hartford
 - 2019- Hartford updated Housing Code for the first time in 40 years
 - Increase transparency and accountability of landlords
 - Investigate former landlords neglecting tenant complaints and exploiting the rent market
 - Enforce regulations for landlords to respond to tenant complaints
 - Maintaining and renovating, repairing, pest control, etc.
 - Emmanuel Ku
 - Previously exploited New York's housing market
 - Owned and operated 26 buildings in Hartford's North End
 - 2,300 health and safety violations under Ku's property
 - Tenants reported roaches, mice, and black mold
 - Many apartments lacked basic functions, including heat, hot water and working toilets
 - Residents and organizations hold Ku accountable for exploitative behaviors of tenants
 - May 2018- HUD cancelled its contract with Ku, Ku managed to sell his properties for a profit of \$6.5 million- three times his purchase price
-
-

News Articles and Reports - 'No More Slumlords' campaign

“We recognized that there were weaknesses in our housing code, a code that hadn’t been updated or overhauled in decades,” said Mayor Luke Bronin.

“Sometimes in some units you see two bathrooms covered with mold. You see holes in the floor. I saw a lady who had a piece of plywood over her bathroom floor and if you pick it up you can see downstairs into the next apartment.”- Teri Morrison, Tenant in Hartford

HARTFORD

State Investigating Former Hartford Landlord

Officials say from 2011 to 2018, Ku operated 26 buildings in Hartford’s North End, including the troubled Clay Arsenal Renaissance Apartments.

stories that help bring the issues to light.

Hartford Residents Claim Victory Against ‘Slumlords’ In City’s New Housing Codes

Connecticut Public Radio | By [Nicole Leonard](#)
Published November 14, 2019 at 6:56 AM EST



▶ LISTEN • 1:11

News Reports



Connecticut investigates HUD-funded landlord who rented infested homes to poor families

SHARE & SAVE — f t e ...

POLITICS NEWS

Connecticut investigates HUD-funded landlord who rented infested homes to poor families

Connecticut's attorney general said his investigation was prompted by the federal government's failure to swiftly protect tenants.



— Mold on the ceiling of an apartment in the Clay Arsenal complex in Hartford, Connecticut, which was owned by Emmanuel Ku. The Rev. AJ Johnson

Textual Analysis

- Analysis of articles and reports
- Understand rent issues and its consequences
- Understand CLJ's success in the No More Slumlords campaign and its current efforts in the Cap The Rent Campaign



Academic Literature

- Peer-reviewed articles on rent issues in different states

Uncontrolled Prices in a Controlled Market:
The Case of Rent Controls

By GEORGE FALLIS AND LAWRENCE B. SMITH*

In recent years there has been a proliferation of rent control legislation which places controls on most rental units, but exempts newly constructed units, vacated units, and/or high-priced units. The relationship between the rental price of the uncontrolled stock under these control regimes and the equilibrium rental price in the absence of

controls is important for policy makers and economists. This paper examines the impact of rent control on the rental market in San Francisco. More specifically, it examines the impact of rent control on the rental market in San Francisco. Moreover, the analysis of the impact of rent control on the rental market in San Francisco is presented. Previous dis

households because that mechanism influences the amount of excess demand which “spills over” to the substitute. However, the Gould-Henry analysis cannot be directly applied to the housing market because it assumes households can simultaneously consume both the controlled good and the uncontrolled substitute; but, in the housing

Do Rent Increases Reduce the Housing Supply under Rent Control? Evidence from Evictions in San Francisco

Brian J. Asquith

W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research

Upjohn Author(s) ORCID Identifier:

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5783-5557>

Article | [Open Access](#) | [Published: 24 October 2017](#)

Rent increase strategies and distributive justice: the socio-spatial effects of rent control policy in Amsterdam

[Arend Jonkman](#) , [Leonie Janssen-Jansen](#) & [Frans Schilder](#)

[Journal of Housing and the Built Environment](#) **33**, 653–673 (2018) | [Cite this article](#)

4454 Accesses | 6 Citations | 3 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Abstract

Rent controls and rent setting regulation in different contexts incorporate and balance different aims, in particular when securing affordability and the effective distribution of scarce housing by incorporating market mechanisms. As rent policy is frequently discussed in terms of affordability or market functioning in broad terms, small-scale distributive socio-spatial effects are often not regarded. In this paper, three strategies under the new rent sum policy are

terdam, the Netherlands, to observe tly decentralizes rent increase housing associations. Using



Collect Testimonies

- Phone banking to collect testimonies from tenants in Hartford affected by increasing rents in recent years
- Encourage tenants to testify at the public hearing to pass bill to cap rent increase in Hartford



Research- Case Studies

- In-depth research of rent cap failures and/or successes in the states of Massachusetts and New Jersey
- Understand rent issues around the country and how Connecticut can adopt successful implementations in other states



Case Studies

People in New Jersey are losing their homes and they can't afford rent. They need relief.
Opinion

NEW JERSEY

Struggling with housing in NJ? We want to hear from renters, landlords, homeowners



Ashley Balcerzak
NorthJersey.com

Published 4:00 a.m. ET May 18, 2021 | Updated 4:07 p.m. ET May 18, 2021

Severe National Affordable Home Shortage Crushing Low Income Families

April 21, 2022, 1:58 pm | in

Our Involvement

Key Takeaways

- Key takeaways from your data collected (i.e. interviews, archival scans, field observations, public data, etc.) - (plus any connection to Trinity if applicable)
- The Housing crisis started in the 1970's with many people in the suburbs suing to stop development housing projects
- Rent prices have increased across the state averaging at around 20%
- There is a Crisis in Connecticut with out-of-state landlords, the pandemic, exorbitant rent increases, and surging evictions
- Particularly larger Connecticut landlords have also taken advantage of tenants to increase profits

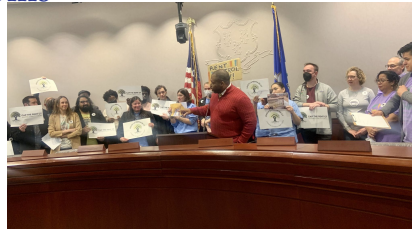


Key Takeaways

- The Solution is to impose a 2.5% rent cap per year and an end to no cause evictions
- 72% of voters support this approach
- Rent caps would free people from the burden of rent changing and would give stability in the market
- Rent control did not pass this legislative session in Connecticut and New Jersey but we look to our neighbor of Massachusetts that is leading this fight as well
- Boston is proposing a 10% rent cap annually and a just-cause eviction clause, now the proposal is being sent to the state legislature for a vote
- There is tremendous opposition to rent caps by landlords with many groups spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to combat these proposals

Testimonies

- Participation in phone banking and attending public hearing held at Capitol
 - Encourage public hearing attendance and testifying for two bills



The Public Hearing

- 2 bills proposed this spring
- Over 14 hours long, and over 180 people testified
 - People were not deterred by the long wait to testify, many people testified at 3 or 4 am
- Bills unfortunately not voted on in housing committee, and are now dead

The background is a solid pink color. In the top right corner, there is a decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping geometric shapes: a dark pink square, a medium pink square, and a light pink square, all partially cut off by the edge of the frame.

Final Product

Our communication deliverables

ANTHOLOGY

I. History of Housing in CT

- A. Previous 70's housing movement
 - 1. Background
 - 2. What the occurred

II. Cap the Rent CT Housing Movement

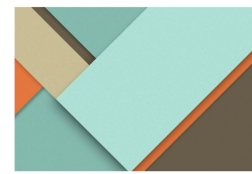
- 1. Brief introduction into CLJ's organizing process
- 2. Findings
- 3. Proposals for Legislation

III. Media coverage

- 1. Coverage over the course of CLJ Campaign

IV. Case Study on Housing Reform

- A. Case Studies of New Jersey and Massachusetts
 - 1. Background
 - 2. What exactly happened, what are the sides? Reasoning?
- B. A look into each studies demographics
- C. Inclusion of personal stories



Cap The Rent Campaign

The Campaign was led by:

CT Fair Housing Center
Democratic Socialist of America

GHAA-CLJ
CT Tenants Union

Makayla Cervantes, Annie Liu, Jackson Stein, Luke Izzo
Young George

The DATA:

According to our data, the average rent in several Connecticut counties has increased dramatically between 2020 and 2022. With a staggering 26% growth, New London County leads the pack, followed by Tolland County at 25%. Rent increase has also plagued New Haven County, Middlesex, Hartford, Fairfield, and Litchfield.

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- Since 2001, the national median rent has risen by 17.9%.
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- Connecticut also lost 9.4% of its low-income housing units (rents under \$600) between 2011 and 2019.

Although studies have shown that rent stabilization increases renter stability and curbs gentrification, it is not a standalone solution to the housing crisis. Low- and moderate-income tenants, as well as members of other marginalized groups, might benefit from rent control regulations since they ensure access to decent, yet cheap, rental accommodation. As members of the local CT community, it's encouraging to see the broad-based support that limits yearly rent increases to 2.5% among our community's groups, religious leaders, tenants, homeowners, and small landlords. According to our data, a whopping 72% of voters approve of this approach, with 48% giving their enthusiastic approval.



Case Studies on Housing Reform

NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCTION

The issue of rent in the state of New Jersey has been a major concern for a long time. New Jersey has always been an expensive state to live in, but with the rise of rent costs and a lack of units available, residents are facing challenges they've never faced before. Efforts have been made to address the rental market, but these efforts have either been unsuccessful or limited due to political opposition and social barriers. However, increasing rents deeply and disproportionately affect people of lower and low-income residents, fostering inequality and injustice to certain residents within the state. With residents constantly fearing eviction and homelessness, a feasible solution needs to be implemented. This case study will focus on and examine the current rent issue in New Jersey as well as its political and social consequences.

CURRENT RENT MARKET

New Jersey, the fourth most expensive state in the nation, is experiencing extremely high demand for rental units and a low supply of affordable housing. However, New Jersey does not have any statewide rent control or stabilization laws. The current rental market in New Jersey is characterized by skyrocketing rent prices, especially in areas with a high cost of living. Unfortunately, New Jersey's rent prices are not dropping anytime soon. With inflation, increasing

Part of analysis of Cap the Rent Movement

HISTORY OF THE CONNECTICUT'S HOUSING MOVEMENT

Connecticut Housing Movement of the 1970s

BACKGROUND

As early as the 1950s, Connecticut began experiencing suburban sprawl. The larger cities of the state, such as Norwich, Waterbury, and Stamford, had begun to experience a decline in population in comparison to a rise in the smaller surrounding suburban towns. This was an occurrence not unseen in the rest of the country either, due to the factors of the post-WWII economic boom.¹ Driven by a variety of factors: housing discrimination urban renewal and the increasing cost of living being amongst the largest determinants. Due to economic expansion brought by the post-war boom, developments such as the construction of the interstate highway system and housing developments became factors in the creation of exclusionary zoning policies and policies in general, due to its allowance of creating a further separation between urban and suburban areas, thus creating a disconnect between the populations. As suburbanites began to value their ownership as a home as part of their wealth, homeowners became sensitive to development that might affect property values, which became the first step in the creation and

EXAMPLES

Interactive map of CT,

Comparison of multiple parameters in a Story Map Method

Parameters:

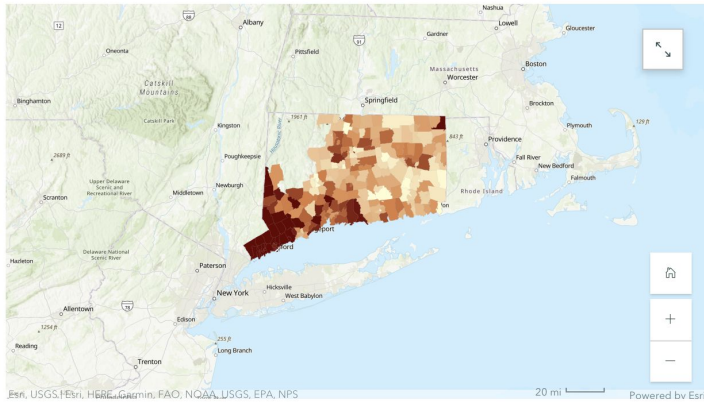
- ❖ Average rent in each town
- ❖ Rent increase over 2 years
 - Use of 2 bedroom average
- ❖ Demographics
 - Income, Race, Poverty
- ❖ Percentage of renters in city
- ❖ Representatives

Our communication deliverables

INTERACTIVE MAP

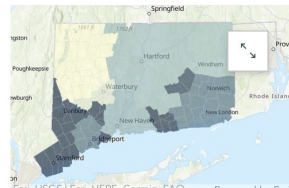
Fair Market Rent Comparisons

Rents have been on the increase, and it's hurting particular demographics in Connecticut

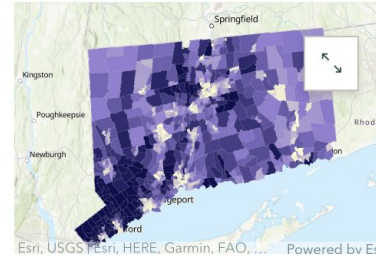


CT SAFMRs (Zip Code Areas) Web Map

It is no secret that there is huge economic disparity with the state of Connecticut, and one can easily see this when comparing the rents of the states largest cities and income, as well as cross-county

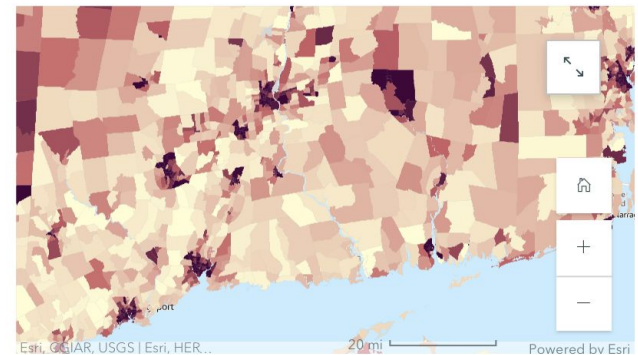


Fair Market Rents by Town Web Map



CT Median Income by Town Web Map

When set side by side, the CT Median Income Web Map and CT Poverty Web Map further demonstrates income disparity within the state.



CT Poverty Web Map

Makayla - Doing the research requested by CLJ, as well as my own research into the barriers in creating rent control, I was able to learn how many factors there are in changing sentiments and passing legislation for rent caps. For example, seeing how historical zoning legislation from areas surrounding major rent areas is one of the key factors in legislation being either enacted or thrown away was incredibly interesting to see. Also, as a CT resident, seeing how I saw people in my life had changed attitudes about rent control during the campaign was a great experience

Jackson- Being able to complete the research requested by CLJ alongside having the opportunity to firsthand experience and witness the public hearing that outlined the research that we were solving was a truly unique experience. Prior to understanding the CLJ, The Cap The Rent Campaign was something that I had never heard of, nor was I aware of the extreme housing crisis that is taking place in the US currently. Through our anthology and our interactive data map, our group built both strong analytical skills and teamwork skills even through some adversity. I enjoyed and learned the positive impact of both the CLJ's mission and how we can come together to make a difference in our community.

Reflections

Annie - Throughout this project and our partnership with CLJ, my group and I were able to document CLJ's progress with the campaign as well as provide further research support to CLJ. With the interactive map we created, CLJ will be able to effectively convey the issues of increasing rents to people and policymakers who might lack knowledge. I learned a lot throughout this project, specifically working with my group and working with community partners, analysing different types of research materials, and most importantly, successfully creating an interactive data map that can actually be implemented to support the campaign. Additionally, I also learned the relevance of political processes, such as public hearings, in determining policies that affects our daily lives. So, this project encouraged me to become more politically active.

Luke - In working with the CLJ I had the opportunity to learn about the realities many in Connecticut are currently facing. I was shocked and appalled by the rent prices increasing drastically year over year. I had the opportunity to experience the legislative process firsthand at the public hearing we attended. I am proud of the anthology we have created and the story map as these will help CLJ in their Cap the Rent campaign in the future.