



Good Cause Opt-in Talking Points

Our Values + The Crisis:

Everyone deserves a safe, stable home, but right now, too many renters are facing rent hikes, non-renewals, or unfair evictions that are forcing them out of their homes and neighborhoods.

- Rent is so high that families are forced to choose between paying rent or paying for food
- Landlords don't need to show they have a good reason to get rid of a tenant – so they're evicting and non-renewing tenants in retaliation for asking for basic repairs
- Landlords are evicting women, children, and renters of color the most

The Solution:

Opting into Good Cause Eviction would make our community more stable, affordable, and fair. Good Cause Eviction guarantees lease renewals, limits rent hikes, and stops unjust evictions.

- With Good Cause, if you pay rent and follow your lease, you get to stay in your home.
- Good Cause stops retaliation and discrimination by requiring landlords to show they have a “Good Cause” (e.g. not paying rent or violating the lease) to remove a tenant
- Good Cause gives people the right to stay in their homes and communities, building stronger neighborhoods for renters and homeowners alike and preserving the city we love.
- New Jersey has had Good Cause for over 50 years, and New York City, Albany, Kingston, Poughkeepsie, and Ithaca have Good Cause too.

Covering All Renters + Closing Loopholes:

Our town/city/village must adopt the strongest version of Good Cause possible and close loopholes used by predatory landlords to abuse tenants. Every renter, no matter where we live or who we rent from, deserves the same right to housing stability.

- **Close the LLC loophole:** Predatory landlords can hide how many units they own behind anonymous LLCs in order to avoid Good Cause, leaving tenants in the dark about whether they have these protections, unless we set the portfolio exemption at 1 unit.
- **Set A High Rent Threshold:** we must set the exemption at 345% of Fair Market Rent so that it becomes a true high rent threshold, instead of an incentive for landlords to increase the rent just to avoid the law.
- Every city that's opted into Good Cause closed these loopholes and covered nearly every renter.

Addressing Landlord Fears:

Landlords who treat their tenants fairly have nothing to fear from Good Cause.

- If you're maintaining your property, raising rents in line with your costs, and not retaliating against your tenants, this legislation will not impact you. Instead it codifies your good business practices into law.
- This legislation will target predatory landlords who are making our city less safe, stable, and affordable just so they can line their pockets.

See also: [Local Good Cause Memo](#), [Ithaca Good Cause Talking Points](#), [Good Cause Overview](#)

Frequently Asked Questions and Tough Questions

How does Good Cause work?

Good Cause requires landlords to have a “Good Cause” to evict or non-renew a tenant, such as violating the lease, damaging the property, creating a nuisance, or not paying the rent.

Tenants can also use “Good Cause” to challenge a rent increase of more than 10% or the Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 5%, whichever is lower ([8.82% in NYC/suburbs/Long Island and 8.45% upstate as of May 2024](#)).

If a tenant falls behind on rent because of a large rent increase, they can raise Good Cause as a defense in court, and the landlord would have to show that they raised the rent beyond the Good Cause threshold because of increased costs, such as tax increases, maintenance costs, and insurance.

What are “Good Causes” to evict or non-renew a tenant?

- Nonpayment of rent
- Violating the lease
- The landlord wishes to recover the unit for personal use
- Causing a nuisance or violating of the law
- The owner intends to demolish or is taking it off the market
- -Failure to sign lease renewal or provide access to apartment

Who is covered by Good Cause?

State law exempts many tenants from the law, but it does allow localities to adjust two of the exemptions. Good Cause covers tenants who:

- Live in a building built before 2009
- Do not live in an owner-occupied building with fewer than 11 units
- Do not live in a co-op, condo, or housing rented as part of an employment agreement
- Do not live in a rent-stabilized, subsidized, manufactured home, or public housing unit. *(These have similar but separate protections)*
- Pay less than a locally defined percent of Fair Market Rent. *(Albany, Ithaca, and Poughkeepsie set the threshold at 345%)*
- Rent from a landlord with a unit portfolio under a certain size, with the number defined by the locality. *(An LLC loophole let landlords hide their portfolio size behind LLCs and evade the law, which is why Albany, Kingston, Poughkeepsie, and Newburgh closed the loophole by setting portfolio size at 1)*

Will this hurt small landlords?

Landlords of any size who treat tenants with respect, provide proper services, and avoid unjust evictions and rent hikes have nothing to fear from Good Cause Eviction laws. These laws allow landlords to raise rents for increased costs and pursue evictions for valid reasons. This legislation targets predatory landlords who raise rents out of greed and retaliate against tenants. If you maintain your property, raise rents in line with costs, and don't retaliate, this legislation won't affect you.

Will landlords still be able to raise rents?

Yes, Good Cause Eviction allows the landlord to raise the rent to whatever level they would like, but it also gives tenants the right to challenge exorbitant rent increases, like the 30, 40, 50 percent increases many tenants are

facing now. If a tenant challenges the rent hike, and the landlord demonstrates that they raised rent beyond 10% or 5% CPI because of increased costs (e.g. increases in taxes, maintenance costs, or insurance), a judge will allow the large increase.

Shouldn't we focus on increasing the supply of housing to reduce rents?

Renters are struggling now and need immediate relief. Good Cause provides instant stability to thousands at no cost to our local government. Evidence on increasing housing supply leading to lower rents is mixed, and any impact from such measures would take years to materialize. Renters can't wait that long; they need solutions today.

Will Good Cause Eviction reduce the supply of housing?

Measures to increase housing supply and Good Cause Eviction can work together hand-in-hand to address the housing crisis. New Jersey has had Good Cause Eviction for nearly 50 years – and [New Jersey has outpaced New York in housing construction](#). The legislation also lets landlords set whatever they want as the “first rent” for apartments - i.e. the rent an apartment goes for when it first goes to market - which means a landlord can set them at a level that covers their construction costs and debt levels.

Does Good Cause reduce landlords' incentive to make repairs? Don't we really need more code enforcement, not good cause?

Good Cause makes it *more* likely that a landlord will address repairs because it empowers tenants to fight for safer conditions without fear of retaliation from their landlord. Good Cause will help tenants hold landlords accountable to the law, and help local housing code enforcement agencies function better by encouraging tenants to call for help proactively without fear of getting kicked out, rather than waiting for often resource-strapped agencies to respond.

Does the law prevent the landlord from evicting tenants who are destructive or refusing to pay rent?

The bill allows evictions when tenants don't pay rent, damage property, use an apartment illegally, or if the owner wants the unit for him/herself or an immediate family member. Good Cause simply gives tenants the right to due process, and ensures tenants are judged innocent until proven guilty.

Won't this slow down housing court, which is already so backlogged?

Studies on California's Good Cause law showed that eviction filings [dropped](#) after Good Cause was passed by getting rid of bunk, no-fault eviction cases. Good Cause is likely to actually help speed up the courts.

Will Good Cause Eviction stop Black and brown landlords from building generational wealth?

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund [endorsed Good Cause](#) because it will stabilize thousands of Black and brown families in our community.

66% of Black New Yorkers across our state are tenants. High rents and evictions are making it harder for New Yorkers of color to stay in their neighborhoods, provide for their families, and save up to buy a home. By keeping rent affordable and protecting Black and brown New Yorkers from retaliatory and discriminatory evictions, Good Cause Eviction would bring stability to Black and brown families and neighborhoods.