

Q & A

RENT CONTROL

Debates about rent regulations are contentious. Housing advocates see them as part of the solution to rising rents, and economists decry them as market interference. But what does research say about their actual impacts in cities?

Q: What can rent stabilization do?

A: Rent regulations protect tenants from steep rent hikes, promote residential stability, and slow displacement from rising housing costs.

Q: How do rent regulations help renters?

A: Most academic studies find that rent stabilization increases tenant housing stability, which can help to foster connections within communities, aging in place, and retention of a workforce in high-cost cities. By keeping rent affordable, renters are able to invest in other areas of their lives, such as education and healthcare, and avoid costly trade-offs.

Q: Why does housing stability matter?

A: Tenants with greater housing stability face less housing-related emotional and physical stress, which leads to better health outcomes for adults and children. Residential stability also enables the creation of important social ties within communities.

Q: How do rent regulations affect housing supply?

A: While more work must be done on the effects of second generation rent controls that exempt new construction, current research indicates that these types of regulations do not impact housing production. When cities allow condo conversions and redevelopment exemptions, however, more rental units tend to be taken off the market.

Q: Who benefits from rent regulations?

A: Research shows that renters in rent stabilized units tend to be older and lower-income, and are more likely to be headed by single-mothers and people of color. However, this is not to the exclusion of younger, more affluent, white renters.