

Madalyn Letellier

From: Cole rainey-slavick [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, December 12, 2024 10:16 AM
To: Public Comments; All City Council
Subject: Brokers fees

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Hello,

I am writing to express my full support for the effort to make landlords responsible for broker fees. Greater Boston is unfortunately unique at this point in forcing these fees onto tenants and that is a major issue for several reasons, besides the basic issue of fairness that the landlord is hiring the broker and therefore the tenant should not be responsible for their payment.

First, I really want to emphasize that this system restricts the freedom of renters. Forcing tenants to pay brokers fees means you might have to pay up to 4 months rent up from whenever you move (first, last, security, and brokers fee). This is a large up front cost that many people simply cannot bear. The impact of this is profoundly negative. People stay in abusive relationships and people stay in inadequate and substandard housing because they cannot afford to leave. People who can manage often do so by doling out most if not all of their savings. This is not sustainable. Eliminating these fees genuinely increases the freedom of working class people to escape (potentially) dangerous situations, and simply to make their own choices about their lives.

Even if the fee is entirely passed on to the renter in the form of increased monthly payments this would still be a marked improvement for renters as it would dramatically reduce the upfront cost and spread the burden across 12 months.

Additionally I want to emphasize that this is a loophole in existing tenant law and while technically legal is a work around to get around the fact that landlords are only supposed to be able to charge first month's rent, last month's rent, a security deposit, and the installation of locks. Oftentimes the broker is someone closely associated with the landlord, if not directly in their employ, closing this loophole would give tenants the protections in practice that we are already entitled to in theory.

Do not forget that a sizable majority of people in Somerville are renters. This would have a large and immediately positive impact on the lives of your constituents. Please pass this resolution as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Cole Rainey-Slavick
Ward 2