

Hartford Courant  
**INSIGHT**

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# WE NEED TO BUILD IN CONNECTICUT

By Christopher P. Reilly

**C**onnecticut's housing market is under great strain. Between persistently high inflation and interest rates, rising demand and limited supply, it has become more expensive not only to buy homes in Connecticut but to build and rent them. This has been keenly felt by Connecticut's multifamily housing communities, prompting state policymakers to consider proposals dealing with affordable housing, rent controls, curbing unscrupulous landlords and spurring new apartment home construction for all ages and income levels.

The members of the Connecticut Apartment Association (CTAA) are committed to helping solve both the symptoms the housing crisis and the underlying causes, starting with expanding and stabilizing the supply of multifamily housing that meets the needs of all ages and incomes, from empty nesters and downsized retirees to young families and students.

The title of a recent op-ed piece in the Wall Street Journal about the housing situation in Virginia captures the fundamental issue: "Yes, there's a housing crisis. No, you can't build here." Well, we

need to build here in Connecticut.

State government can help by increasing the likelihood of success in permitting housing. Streamlining the permitting process and incentives for the production of affordable housing are necessary to increase supply in a timely fashion.

There are projects in the state that have taken close to 10 years from application to a shovel in the ground. That should be unacceptable to everyone given the housing crisis. It will also take state action to increase the infrastructure needed for additional housing in the state. The electrical grid, water

and natural gas delivery systems need critical investment, so let's get to it.

We have heard heartbreaking stories told at the legislature's Housing Committee of so many people and their housing situations. Let's take action together to improve their lives and living conditions.

In the short term, there are state, federal and local affordable housing and living assistance programs administered by the Connecticut Department of Housing and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and others that work. Many of us help our residents learn how to access them.

There is also work that clearly needs to be done to make sure residents can report poor housing conditions without fear of retaliation.

Additional resources at the city/town level for inspectors and enforcement would go a long way to solve the problem of bad landlords and help bring housing standards up to current codes and acceptable living standards.

More housing means more jobs, a stronger state economy, more

The cost of renting an apartment is easing after skyrocketing in recent years, though it remain painfully high for many Americans. The U.S. median rent rose 2.4% in January 2023 from a year earlier to \$1,942, the lowest annual increase since June 2021, according to data from Rent, which tracks listings for apartment and rental houses. **MATT ROURKE/AP**

market-rate and affordable workforce living options and fewer individuals and families left at the mercy of landlords who abuse the trust of providing safe and decent housing.

The members of CTAA are professional, responsible housing providers who stand ready to play our part as developers, builders, owners and managers to help solve this crisis, and who will stay at the table with Connecticut's lawmakers to craft a long-term and sustainable response to the housing crisis.

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