

TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 24 2026

CAPITOL

Day
Madison, WI



WIRHC
Capitol Day

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

This is your opportunity to advocate and have meaningful conversations with lawmakers about the challenges and opportunities facing the rental property industry. Together, we can work to create positive changes that benefit both landlords and tenants in Wisconsin.

WHY ATTEND?

Housing policy debates are too often shaped by media coverage that amplifies tenant and advocacy perspectives, while leaving out the voices of those who build, own, and manage rental housing.

Lawmakers need to hear directly from owners, managers, and investors about how policy and economic changes affect housing availability, operations, and long-term affordability. When decisions are made without that real-world context, the unintended consequences often hit tenants and communities the hardest – the very people policymakers intend to help.

By showing up at the Capitol, you help to ensure Wisconsin's housing policies remain balanced, informed, and rooted in reality.

About Wisconsin Rental Housing Coalition

Please view our website to learn more.

www.WIRHC.org

EVENT SCHEDULE

9:00am – Registration & Coffee

10:00am – Welcome, Opening Remarks & Issue Briefing

11:00am – Wisconsin Legislators
Rep. Scott Krug – 72nd District (R)
Rep. Mike Bare – 80th District (D)
Sen. Kristin Dassler-Alfheim – District 18 (D)
Sen Rob Stafsholt – District 10 (R)

12:00pm – Lunch

*1:15pm – Group Picture at the Capitol Rotunda

*1:30pm – Industry Experts, Owners, Managers & Attorneys Field Questions

*2:30 – Regional Breakouts with Legislators and or Staff (Office Visits Optional)

4:00pm – Networking Reception at the Best Western Premier Park Hotel
(Following WI Ethics Rules)

*Event takes place at the Capitol Building



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 1.....Event Informational Flyer

Page 2.....Table of Contents

Page 3-6.....Who We Are and What We Support

Page 7-8.....David J. Decker – Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Op Ed

Page 9.....Rental Housing Industry Economic Impact Statement

Page 10.....Who Owns Rentals?

Page 11.....Rent Control Issue Brief by the NAA

Page 12.....The “955 Principle” Pie Chart

Page 13.....The Theory of Unintended Consequences & Collateral Damages– Practical Application

Page 14.....2023: Breaking Down One Dollar of Rent by the NAA

Page 15.....2019: Breaking Down One Dollar of Rent by the NAA

Page 16.....The 5 Year Troubling Financial Trend – Dollar of Rent Analysis by the NAA & Our Own



The Rental Housing Coalition — We House Wisconsin

Dear Wisconsin Legislators,

Who We Are

The Rental Housing Coalition is a statewide alliance representing the majority of Wisconsin's residential rental housing providers. Our members include the leading housing and rental housing trade organizations across the state, spanning urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Coalition members include:

Apartment Association of Northeast Wisconsin, Inc.	Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM-Madison)
Apartment Association of South Central Wisconsin	Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM-Milwaukee)
Apartment Owners and Managers Association of WI	Rental Property Association of Wisconsin, Inc
Fox Valley Apartment Association, Inc.	Wisconsin Housing Alliance
Kenosha Landlord Association, Inc	Wisconsin Realtors® Association

Collectively, the Coalition represents thousands of housing providers who maintain, operate, and reinvest in Wisconsin's rental housing.



Continued on next page...

Who We Are continued...

Our Economic Impact and Contribution to Wisconsin Communities:

The Wisconsin rental housing industry contributes **\$45.2B** to the state economy annually, supporting **254.9K** jobs. Our industry provides **438.6K** housing units for **654.9K** residents across the state. *[Please see the attached Rental Housing Industry Economic Impact Statement on page 9.]*

Rental housing is a foundational component of Wisconsin's housing ecosystem. Approximately one-third of Wisconsin residents live in rental housing, with higher concentrations in many communities, including Milwaukee (58% renters), Madison (53% renters), and Green Bay (44% renters). University communities such as La Crosse, Eau Claire, and Whitewater have more than half of residents renting during the academic year.

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2024 (Table DP04))

Rental housing supports our workforce, students, seniors, and families at every income level. A stable, healthy rental housing market is essential to economic growth, job creation, and community vitality throughout Wisconsin.

Who Owns Rentals:

In 2023, individual investors dominated the rental property market. **82.4%** of purchases were made by Mom & Pop investors owning 1-9 properties, and another **11.2%** by those owning 10-99 properties. In total, these small investors accounted for **93.6%** of purchases. Larger entities, including iBuyers and owners with over 100 properties, comprised only **6.4%** of the market. (John Burns Consulting) *[Please see the attached "Who Owns Rentals?" bar chart on page 10.]*

Rent Control:

Recent evidence from St. Paul, Minnesota, indicates that rent control policies diminish investment in rental housing and result in fewer new units being constructed, with deferred maintenance escalating, ultimately harming communities. Please visit our website at www.WIRHC.org, to read the [RHC Position Statement – Rent Control a Key Housing Policy Issue](#). *[Please see the attached Rent Control Issue Brief published by the National Apartment Association (NAA), on page 11, to learn more details about how these well-intended housing policies have failed.]*

Eviction Prevention Programs:

Evictions are costly for property owners and should be avoided whenever possible. In Milwaukee County alone, the court issues \$12 million in eviction judgments each year, but this represents only a fraction of the unpaid rent and property damage sustained by owners forced to file an eviction.

Please visit our website at www.WIRHC.org, to read the article: [Lawyers Aren't Rent – by the Stanford Law Review](#), for more information on Evictions.

[The Welfare Effects of Eviction and Homelessness Policies Boaz Abramson \(Yale Economics\)](#)

"Right-to-Counsel" drives up rents so much that homelessness increases by 15% and welfare is dampened. Since defaults on rent are driven by persistent income shocks, making it harder to evict tends to extend the eviction process but doesn't prevent evictions. In contrast, rental assistance lowers tenants' default risk and as a result reduces homelessness by 45% and evictions by 75%.

(Source: https://economics.yale.edu/sites/default/files/jmp_the_welfare_effects_of_eviction_and_homelessness.pdf)

Who We Are continued...

The RHC advocates for increased emergency rental assistance, providing the essential resources that directly aid tenants in their efforts to prevent eviction. Please visit our website at www.WIRHC.org, to read the RHC Position Statement – Evictions and Records Retention a Key Housing Policy Issue.

Theory of Unintended Consequences and Collateral Damage:

- **The 955 Principle:**

More than 95% of renters pay their rent on time, maintain the property as expected, are good neighbors, and have no chronic lease violations. Proposed legislation that aims to protect those who do not, only harm the very renters they seek to protect—the 5%—but they also negatively impact the 95% who face the unintended consequences, and collateral damages of such proposals. These bills raise housing costs for everyone and reduce the availability of housing for those who need it most. *[Please see the attached “955 Principle” Pie Chart on page 12.]*

- **Screening Restrictions:**

Tenant rights, eviction, and rent affordability — Journal of Urban Economics May 2025
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0094119025000270>)

“Our findings suggest that while stringent regulations may reduce evictions, they could lead to unintended consequences such as inflated house prices and heightened homelessness. Policymakers must carefully balance these potential drawbacks against the goal of tenant protection to avoid exacerbating existing housing affordability challenges.”

[Please see the attached Theory of Unintended Consequences & Collateral Damages – Practical Application on page 13.]

The RHC advocates for common-sense legislation that ensures fairness for tenants and property owners that promotes the sustainability of rental housing. When policy decisions are made without the real-world context, the unintended consequences often hit tenants, neighborhoods and communities the hardest – the very people policy makers intended to help.

Affordability Concerns:

Increasing property taxes directly raises rents. For example, the Milwaukee School Tax Referendum on tax bills in January 2025 have significantly affected rental costs. Property insurance, utilities, costs of money, operating costs, AND now legal costs (*Koble*) continue to rapidly increase. Note, some market segments are struggling to find adequate insurance coverage altogether. All of this will lower the inventory stock of affordable housing and threaten the overall sustainability of rental housing.

Rental Profitability:

The National Apartment Association’s study in 2023 shows that larger, professionally managed properties return 7%, a 22% reduction from the same study conducted in 2019. The Census Bureau found that 50% of owners are unprofitable. In sharp contrast, the Dow Jones Industrial Average returned 12.9% in 2024, with a 11.2% to 12.9% average annual return over the past decade. Even more impressive is the NASDAQ Composite 2024 return of 28.6%, with a Ten-Year average return of 15.9%.

The RHC advocates that without successful owners, there can be no rental housing for tenants. Wisconsin’s most vulnerable residents rely on rental housing. *[Please see the attached, 2023/2019 Dollar of Rent Analysis by the NAA, and The 5 Year Troubling Financial Trend – Dollar of Rent Analysis by the NAA & Our Own, on pages 14-16.]*

The Rental Housing Coalition Supports Affordable Rental Housing and Our Residents:

What We Support:

✓ Efforts to Make Housing More Affordable for All.

- Increased property taxes, utilities, financing costs, repairs, and insurance are a burden on all Wisconsinites, particularly hitting the elderly on fixed incomes.
- Insurance for rental properties has increased dramatically and become increasingly unavailable. Not only does this affect rental owners, but it also leaves no funds available to repair or remove damaged structures, placing a burden on municipalities and taxpayers.

✓ Efforts to Increase Housing Supply.

- Wisconsin has taken the lead with the Workforce Housing 2025 Act 78
- We further support efforts to address veteran housing and homelessness.
- Similarly, we support efforts to streamline zoning, permitting, modernized codes, and planning to enable faster, more cost-effective housing production for all Wisconsinites.
- We support WHEDA as an important partner in Wisconsin housing production.

✓ Lead Pipe Replacement Programs

- Tethered to funding programs to help homeowners and rental property owners pay for very expensive upgrade and retrofitting costs.

✓ Expansion of Rental Housing Resources for Tenants.

- Programs that help renters facing eviction by guiding them to available resources ultimately help landlords and facilitate housing stability.

✓ Expanding and Modernizing Rent Assistance Programs

- Emergency Rent Assistance to help people facing temporary housing insecurity is far more effective than providing attorneys who delay evictions rather than address the root-cause.

✓ Mediation as a Viable Alternative to Evictions

- Evictions are costly, disruptive, and stressful to both renters and property owners.
- Additional funding be allocated to mediation services.

The RHC looks forward to working with our State Legislators in developing common sense, practical solutions that promote the sustainability of housing in the rental property industry.

Sincerely,

Wisconsin Rental Housing Coalition (RHC):

David J. Decker – Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Op-ed, January 5, 2026

(With permission from Mr. Decker to use it.)

Moves to protect renters actually make housing cost more | Opinion

A growing number of cities, most recently Tacoma, Washington, have tried to “help renters” by making evictions harder. Think winter moratoriums and protections for students and educators during the school year. The intention sounds compassionate. The outcome is predictable: fewer rentals, stricter screening, and higher rents.

We don’t have to look to the West Coast to see the problem. Wisconsin landlords and property managers are watching the same national policy trend creep into local conversations as affordability remains strained.

In Wisconsin, the rental housing market is still dominated by small operators — people with a duplex, a fourplex, or a handful of units — not institutional owners with deep balance sheets. And that competition helps keep rents in check. The cost and complication of these kinds of regulations drive those small competitors out of the market.

Milwaukee ‘protections’ could make housing affordability worse.

These trends matter because Milwaukee is already moving toward expanded tenant protections and eviction prevention. Milwaukee County’s new Right to Counsel pilot provides free legal representation for some residents facing eviction or foreclosure, and Wisconsin legislators have also proposed requiring landlords to notify tenants of a right to counsel in leases and eviction notices.

Milwaukee’s Rental Housing Resource Center and the state’s Eviction Data Project reflect the same reality: eviction policy is a live issue here, and future policy changes are very much on the table.

The theory goes like this: if you restrict evictions during certain months or for certain households, renters get “stability.” But in practice, it often creates a perverse incentive for nonpayment — and shifts the financial burden onto housing providers who still have to pay taxes, insurance, utilities, repairs, and mortgages.

Most renters pay their rent and only fall behind through job loss or medical issues. Landlords used to be able to use the eviction process as a nudge that often led to repayment plans before the debt got unmanageable. When eviction becomes functionally unavailable for long stretches of the year, many renters don’t “catch up.” They fall further behind. Then when eviction finally happens, the balance is so large that nobody wins.

That’s not just a private landlord issue. Public housing authorities and nonprofit providers face the same math. If rent collections collapse, the agencies burn reserves and taxpayer dollars — money that could have been used to repair units, improve safety, or serve families sitting on waiting lists.

Continued on next page...

Moves to protect renters actually make housing cost more | Opinion *continued...*

Opinion: With 'Trump babies' remark, Republican strategy is revealed.

And here's the part policymakers rarely acknowledge: even the possibility of expanded eviction restrictions changes behavior. Owners respond rationally. Small rental providers— especially those with just a few units — start asking themselves if the risk is worth it. Many sell. Others decide not to buy another property. Others stop improving units because the return isn't there.

Meanwhile, the landlords who remain tighten screening. They require higher credit scores, more income, and longer job history. They stop taking chances on tenants with weaker backgrounds — not because they're mean, but because they're being asked to shoulder greater risk.

Want to boost supply and lower costs? Make it easier to provide housing.

This is how you end up with the worst of all worlds: fewer rentals, fewer mom-and-pop providers, more corporate ownership, and fewer opportunities for the very tenants these policies claim to protect.

Wisconsin doesn't need policies that sound good at a press conference but quietly shrink the housing supply. If we want more affordable housing in Milwaukee and throughout the state, we need to make it easier to provide housing — not harder.

The goal — keeping families housed — is important. But policies that reduce supply end up making affordability worse for everyone, especially low-income renters. Because when eviction becomes impossible, housing doesn't become more affordable. It becomes less available.

David Decker is a Wisconsin-based real estate investor.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin apartments and their residents contribute **\$45.2B** to the state economy annually, supporting **254.9K** jobs.

654.9K

Apartment Residents

Spending from Wisconsin's apartment residents contributes **\$39.4B** to the local economy each year (including **\$3.0B** in taxes), creating **230K** jobs.

438.6K

Apartment Homes

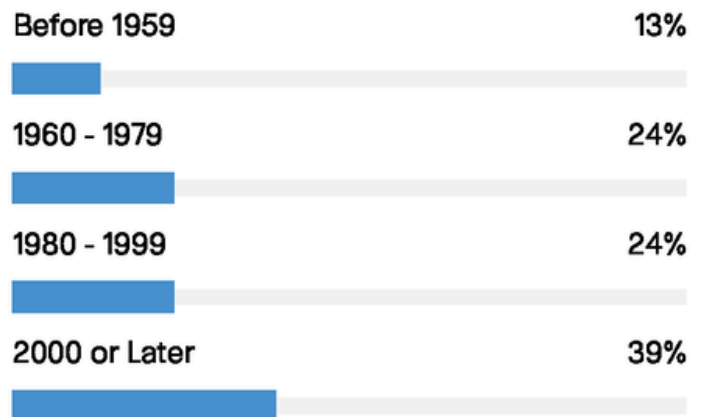
The operation of Wisconsin's apartment homes contributes **\$2.1B** to the local economy each year (including **\$534.0M** in property taxes), creating **4K** jobs.

37%

Share of Wisconsin's Apartments Built Before 1980

The renovation and repair of apartments helps preserve Wisconsin's older more affordable units, contributing **\$912.0M** to the local economy annually and creating **5K** jobs.

Age of Stock



3K

New Apartments Needed Annually

Apartment demand is growing and the industry needs to keep up. However, producing enough new apartments to meet demand requires new development approaches, more incentives and fewer restrictions. Wisconsin needs to build **3K** new apartment homes each year to meet demand. Apartment construction contributes **\$2.8B** to Wisconsin's economy annually, creating **15K** jobs.

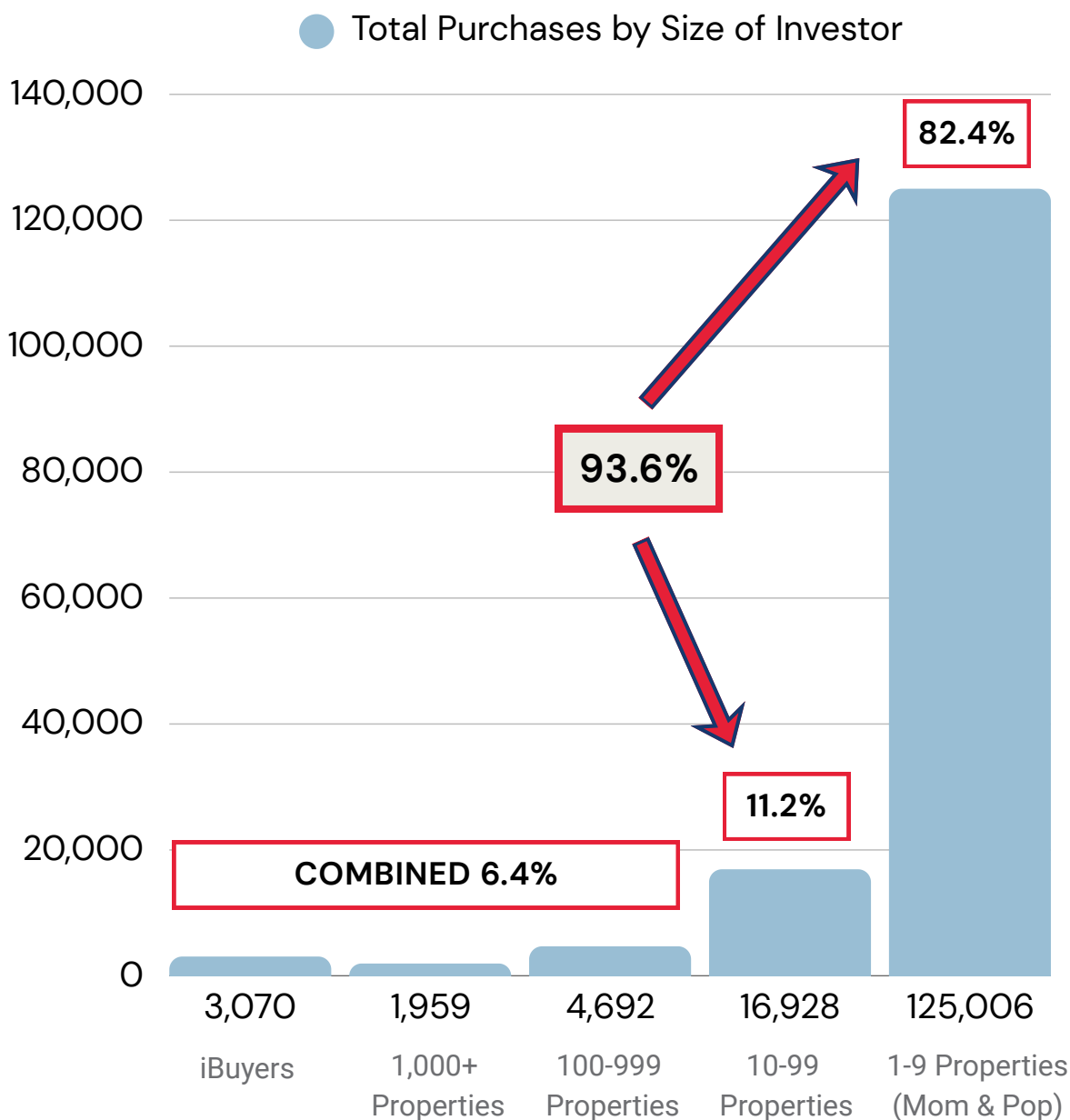


Source: Hoyt Advisory Services; NMHC/NAA; 2023 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Who Owns Rentals?

Total Purchases by Size of Investor

U.S. National Investor Purchases Through Q4 2023



Source: John Burns Consulting



ISSUE BRIEF

RENT CONTROL

Rent regulation policies, generally known as *rent control*, are government-enforced limits to the price that can be charged in rent for private, market rate rental housing. This can also take the form of *rent stabilization*, or *rent caps*, which limits the amount that rent can be increased each year.

All rent regulation poses as an artificial and arbitrary interference in the rental industry. These policies destabilize the market and hurt the local economy.

Reduced quality

Rent control limits the ability for owners and investors to make a profit. This is particularly harmful to small, “mom-and-pop” landlords whose profit margins tend to be very thin. If these owners see their revenues drop, they may have to reduce maintenance on their property which will decrease the quality of units in the area.

Decreased supply

In a worst-case scenario, operating rent-controlled rental housing becomes unprofitable, and owners will be forced to convert their properties into condominiums or otherwise take their property off the rental market. Further, new units are less likely to be developed with rent control policies in place. Developers and investors will simply take their business to other jurisdictions. By distorting the natural forces of supply and demand, rent control worsens the current shortage of housing felt in many municipalities across the country.

Other consequences

- Economists are in near-universal agreement that rent control decreases housing supply
 - To compensate for the lack of supply, non-controlled units will increase in cost.
 - This causes aggregate rent costs across the city to increase.
- The assessed value of existing property decreases, significantly reducing the property tax.
 - Non-controlled properties also decrease in value.
- A large and expensive bureaucracy must be created to enforce the policy.
- The community loses the large economic activity, job creation and wages created by housing development, rehabilitation, and maintenance.
- Rent control is not targeted at low-income renters and the wealthy often get the most benefits.

Positive alternatives to rent control

- Rental assistance for low-income renters.
- Property tax credits for affordable housing providers.
- Reduced regulatory impediments to constructing affordable housing.
 - Land use and zoning laws like minimum lot sizes and maximum density regulations increase the cost of housing development which is ultimately passed on to residents.
- Provide tax incentives, grants, or other funding opportunities to build affordable housing.

POSITION STATEMENT

Rent control distorts the housing market by acting as a deterrent and disincentive to develop rental housing, and expedites the deterioration of existing housing stock.

CASE STUDY

- After St. Paul, MN passed rent control in November of 2021, new building permits immediately fell 80% compared to a year prior.
- Independent economic research found that rent control was more likely to benefit the wealthy at the expense of the low-income and minority households.

For more information, please contact us:
www.naahq.org | government_affairs@naahq.org



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Context of Resident Behaviors – Relevant to Housing Policy THE “955 PRINCIPLE”



More than 95% of Residents:

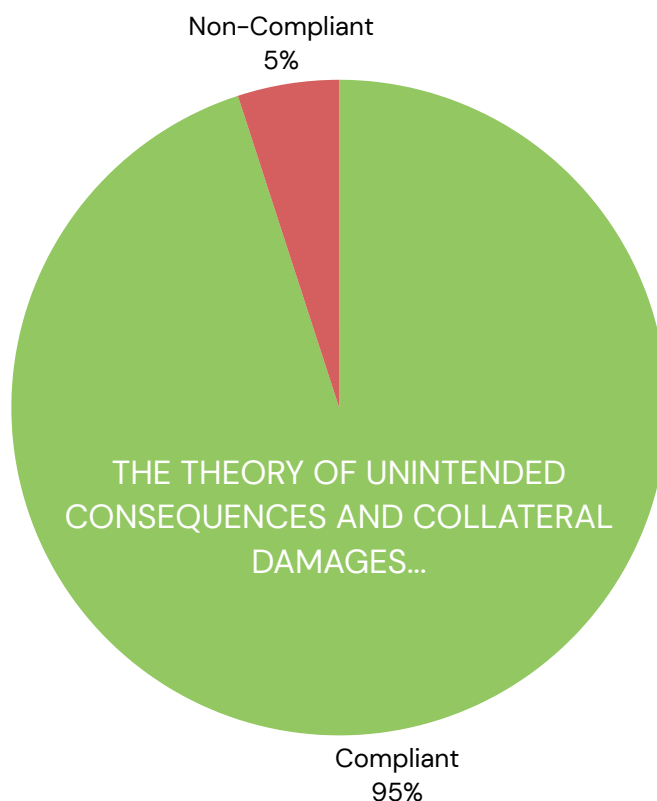
- Pay rent on time
- Maintain & clean the property as expected
- Respect neighbors
- Comply with lease terms



Less than 5% of Residents — account for:

- Late rent payments
- Do not maintain & clean the property as expected
- Are not good neighbors
- Chronic lease violations

All of this can lead to an eviction action.



Theory of "Unintended Consequences and Collateral Damages" – Practical Application

APPLICANTS SEEKING 2 BEDROOM, 1 BATH:

Applicant: **RICK**

Applicant: **MIKE**

Landlord Rental History – 3 Years	Landlord Rental History – 2 Years
Full Time Employment – 3 Years	Full Time Employment – 2 Years
FICO Score Range – 675–700, No Debt	FICO Score Range – 675–700, \$300/mo. debt
Criminal Background Check – No Red Flag	Criminal Background Check – No Red Flag
Muni Court – Clean	Muni Court – Clean
Sex Offender Registry – Nothing	Sex Offender Registry – Nothing
Applying for a Rental of \$1,250/month (Gross Income at least 3x rent)	Applying for a Rental of \$1,250/month (Gross Income at least 3x rent)
Earns \$4,500/month Gross Income	Earns \$4,200/month Gross Income

Who Would You Rent To Based on the Data Above?

3 Evictions Over the Past 5 Years with Over \$18,000 in Outstanding Judgements	No Evictions Over the Past 5 Years
--	------------------------------------

Now... Who Do You Want To Rent To?

What % of the Pie Chart is **RICK**?

5%

What % of the Pie Chart is **MIKE**?

95%

"The Unintended Consequences"

"The Collateral Damages"

2023: BREAKING DOWN ONE DOLLAR OF RENT

With so much discussion around rent payments and the prevailing misconception that rental housing owners enjoy large margins, the industry would like to offer this explanation of the breakdown of \$1 of rent based on the national average.

Only 7 cents of every \$1

is returned to owners as profit, including the many apartment owners who are themselves small businesses and rely on this revenue to make ends meet, and investors, which include public pensions and retirement plans that many Americans rely on whether or not they reside in rental housing.

2 cents of every \$1 goes

toward capital expenditure reserves. The funds in these reserves cover roof and HVAC replacements and other important repairs that help ensure quality housing for America's 38.9 million rental housing residents.

46 cents of every \$1

pays for the mortgage on the property. This is a critical expense, as mortgage foreclosures put all residents at risk of losing their housing.

11 cents of every \$1 goes to property taxes, which in turn support the community through financing for schools, teachers, emergency services and other important local needs.

27 cents of every \$1 pays for operating expenses such as property and liability insurance, utilities and ongoing maintenance.

7 cents of every \$1 covers payroll expenses, including pay for employees who operate and maintain the community as part of the 17.5 million jobs that the industry supports.

Between mortgage payments, investor returns—which help support many Americans' retirement plans—and dollars put back into the apartment community to ensure quality living for residents, a rent payment is much more important than one might otherwise realize.



2019: BREAKING DOWN ONE DOLLAR OF RENT

With so much discussion around rent payments and the prevailing misconception that rental housing owners enjoy large margins, the industry would like to offer this explanation of the breakdown of one dollar of rent.

Only **9 cents of every \$1** are returned to owners as profit, including the many apartment owners who are themselves small businesses and rely on this revenue to make ends meet, and investors, which include public pensions and 401(k) plans, on which many Americans rely—whether or not they reside in rental housing.

11 cents of every \$1 is spent on capital expenditures, including roof and HVAC replacements and other important repairs that help ensure quality housing for America's 40 million rental housing residents.

17 cents of every \$1 pays for operating expenses such as property and liability insurance, utilities and ongoing maintenance



38 cents of every \$1 pays for the mortgage on the property. This is a critical expense, as mortgage foreclosures put all residents at risk of losing their housing.

10 cents of every \$1 covers payroll expenses, including pay for employees who operate and maintain the community as part of the 17.5 million jobs that the industry supports.

15 cents of every \$1 goes to property taxes, which in turn support the community through financing for schools, teachers, emergency services and other important local needs.

Between mortgage payments and investor returns, which help support many Americans' retirement plans, and dollars put back into the apartment community to ensure quality living for residents, a rent payment is much more important than one might otherwise realize.

The 5 Year Troubling Financial Trend

The NAA and Our Own Private Dollar of Rent Analysis

~"The Making Housing Affordable Challenge"~

Categories Where One Dollar of Rent Goes...	Breaking Down One Dollar of Rent		
	2019	2023	23' vs 19' \$ Change
Total Expenses	\$0.80	\$0.91	\$0.11
Capital Expenditures (CapX)	\$0.11	\$0.02	\$(0.09)
<i>Owner Profit</i>	\$0.09	\$0.07	\$(0.02)

- Cap expenditures have been reduced by **82%** over the past 5 years
- Owner profits have been reduced by **22%** over the past 5 years
- Our own dollar of rent analysis (5000 + Doors) confirmed similar results: (Some Key Findings)
 - ✓ Rent increases on existing residents (17.6%) did not keep up with increasing costs (34.2%)
 - ✓ Rent increases on new residents (33.3%) did not even keep up with increasing costs (34.2%)
 - ✓ Operating costs were up 34.2% vs CPI of 20.6%
- Yet another key finding – The Stock Market returned far larger gains than 9% and 7% over this same 5-Year Period:
 - ✓ The Dow Jones Industrial Average returned 12.9% in 2024, with an 11.2% to 12.9% average annual return over the past decade.
 - ✓ Even more impressive is the NASDAQ Composite 2024 return of 28.6%, with a Ten-Year average return of 15.9%.
- Rental Profitability concerns continue to escalate. The RHC advocates that without successful owners, there is no rental housing for tenants. Wisconsin's most vulnerable residents rely on rental housing.