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NDP: Rent increase loophole must be closed

QUEEN'S PARK - NDP Municipal Affairs and Housing Critic Cindy Forster says the time has come to make renting in Ontario more affordable, by closing a rent increase loophole in the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

"When a tenant in Ontario is forced out of their home by an arbitrary rent increase, the system is not working," said Forster. "Closing this rent increase loophole is an important step in making housing more affordable in Ontario and ensuring fair protection for all tenants."

For housing built before 1991, the government caps annual rent increases at 2.5% or less. However, owners of apartment and condos units built after 1991 can increase rents as much as they like each year. This rent increase loophole was intended to spur construction of new rental housing, but it has failed to do so.

This afternoon, Forster will introduce a Private Member's Bill, called "The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Rules Relating to Rent Increases)," which would close the loophole.

"This misguided rule has not accomplished what it was meant to, and very little new rental housing has been built," said Forster. "For tenants living in these newer buildings, it has been 20 years of uncertainty and unfairness."

Forster was joined at her press conference today by NDP GTA Issues Critic and Davenport MPP Jonah Schein.

"This is an important step forward in tenant protection in Ontario and it is long overdue," said Schein. "There is a lack of affordable housing in our province, and it's time that this government finally takes steps to address this problem."

Forster and Schein were joined at Queen's Park representatives from the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO), the Federation of Metro Tenant's Association (FMTA), West Toronto Community Legal Services, and affected tenants.

Quotes:

"All of Ontario's tenants – especially those on low incomes – deserve protection from unjustified rent increases. The Government of Ontario should have closed this gap in the law years ago. We hope that MPPs of all parties will support Ms Forster's call to make this important change." – *Kenn Hale (ACTO)*

"The rent control exemption is an open invitation for landlords to bully vulnerable and low-income people out of their homes. We welcome legislation to fill the gap in protection for Ontario's tenants." – *Dale Whitmore (West Toronto Community Legal Services)*

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