

# Bill 205, Housing Statutes (Housing Security) Amendment Act, 2023

**Letter to the Critic for Housing, Government of  
Alberta**

February 26, 2024

**M.L.A. Janis Irwin**

Critic for Housing

M.L.A. for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood

9820 - 107 Street, NW

Edmonton, Alberta T5K 1E7

Dear M.L.A. Irwin,

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights, Canada's leading registered charity organization working to advance the right to adequate housing. For 35 years, we have worked tirelessly at the intersection of human rights and housing, providing free services to renters facing evictions and human rights violations to remain housed, providing education and training about housing rights across Canada, and advancing rights-based housing policy through research, policy development, advocacy, and litigation.

As you know, the lack of affordable rental housing and the sharp rise in rents have become key issues in Alberta. The province is now the national leader in [annual rent growth](#), with [rent prices in Edmonton and Calgary rising faster than anywhere else](#) in the country. A lack of rent regulations combined with decreasing [vacancy rates](#) is incentivizing landlords to practice rent gouging, charging rents far higher than what is necessary to cover their expenses and make a reasonable profit. As a result, [stories of renters](#) facing untenable rent increases of up to 50 per cent abound.

Lower income households, particularly people living on fixed incomes, simply cannot absorb this level of spending increase. As a result, more and more people are facing economic evictions and are at increased risk of homelessness. The housing crisis in Alberta requires urgent solutions. While supplying more housing is essential, new housing is not going to be built today, and in the absence of robust affordability requirements, it will not be affordable to most Albertans.

Rent regulations ensure fairness and security for all renters. We strongly support your Private Member's Bill 205, *Housing Statutes (Housing Security) Amendment Act, 2023*, which takes an important step forward for Alberta on rent increase guidelines and affordable housing reporting. Establishing a temporary rent cap and vacancy control will ensure that rents are fair for existing and new renters, while putting a stop to rent gouging until more permanent, affordable housing solutions are available.

We also support the inclusion of minimum annual affordable and social housing targets under the *Alberta Housing Act*. This will ensure that sufficient affordable housing is produced to meet the needs of Albertans in core housing need. Alberta has one of [the lowest levels of social housing stock](#) in Canada. In addition to building more social housing to meet current needs, reporting requirements would also hold the government accountable for maintaining its existing stock of social housing.

We appreciate the opportunity to lend our support to Bill 205. We welcome ongoing opportunities to provide our housing expertise and look forward to further discussions to ensure Albertans can live in secure and affordable homes.

Sincerely,



Dale Whitmore

Director of Policy and Law Reform  
Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR)