

Robert J. La Trémouille
348 Franklin Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Telephone 617-491-7181
November 17, 1994

RE: Relationship of "Minimum Rent" Concept to Rooming House / S.R.O. Tenants

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL:

City Councillor Triantafillou has been kind enough to transmit a communication from a group which met

1. last Thursday in a large group at a time which prevented participation by people participating in the city council meeting
2. last Friday evening in a much smaller session.

As near as I can figure out, the organizers of this group are, for all practical purposes, identical with the organizers of the Cambridge Tenants Union / CEOC.

The package from this group was presented to a very large meeting on Sunday. That meeting was kept from discussing the condo eviction and the rooming house / "minimum rent" provisions. I have previously objected to the first three items in the package being presented to the city council on Monday as the report of the large Sunday meeting.

The Monday presentation did not mention the Rooming House / "Minimum Rent" issue, so I did not respond to it.

A very significant number of "low rent" controlled rental units are rooms in rooming houses. Rent controlled rooms in rooming houses are each treated as rent control units.

Using those rented rooms as means of comparing low rents is flagrantly unfair. It confuses issues, hurting the poorest of the poor, the people living in rooming house rooms, in the name of correcting a perceived problem of apartments with extremely low rents.

Nevertheless, the Rent Control Board has entertained policy proposals which did exactly that. Those policy proposals would have created rent increases biased against the poorest of the poor for no reason except that renting of single rooms results in low rents. One or two of those proposals actually passed the Rent Control Board.

Key people in the Name-of-the-Week club (the Thursday/Friday/Sunday organizers) have also called themselves "leaders" of the Cambridge Tenants Union.

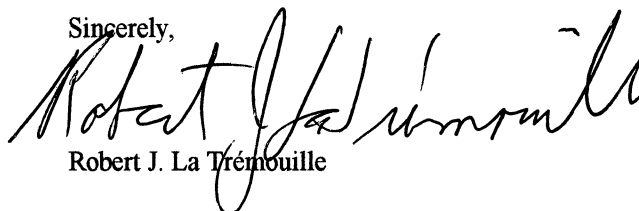
These people sat silent every time the Rent Control Board heard these proposals to unfairly single out Rooming House tenants for mistreatment as "low rent" units. This is part of a general policy which goes as follows:

1. You absolutely must protect tenants whose interests are exactly the same as mine (i.e. the "leaders").
2. It is anti-tenant to protect tenants whose interests are not exactly the same as mine (i.e. the "leaders").

This anti-tenant attitude from "tenant leaders" is the reason why major anti-tenant problems exist in the present system.

If you consider low rent proposals, please take great care that Rooming House tenants are specifically excluded from the proposals and remember the bad record of the "tenant leaders" you may be talking to.

Sincerely,



Robert J. La Trémouille

Comm. # 4

S-523

Comm. from Robert J. LaTremouille, 348
Franklin Street, regarding the relationship
of "minimum rent" concept to Rooming House/
S.R.O. Tenants.

In City Council,

November 17, 1994

Placed on file