

Fight over California rent control is coming

By Angela Hart, Sacramento Bee

A Santa Monica lawmaker is preparing to battle California's powerful real estate industry, going after a state law that for two decades has blocked cities from adopting stronger rent control measures.

A report released this year by California housing officials indicated the state's housing crisis is unprecedented. So Democratic Assemblyman Richard Bloom decided to target a state law passed in 1995 that curtails the type of housing covered under local rental control laws and prevents cities from strengthening tenant protections for renters.

In California, when a tenant leaves a rent-controlled unit, landlords are allowed to raise the rent to market rate, raising the rent-control floor. The number of housing units covered by any local rent-control ordinance is severely restricted. Single-family homes, duplexes and condominiums are also exempt. Under current law, rent control doesn't apply to housing built after 1995. Cities that adopted rent control prior to 1995 cannot strengthen existing ordinances.

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