

GUEST COLUMN: Lawmakers are driving landlords out of Colorado

By [Bill Bivens](#) November 16, 2025 | updated 2 months ago

Judging by housing policy in Colorado, elected leaders in Denver and at the State Capitol clearly haven't heard the adage that you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar. Taking the politically convenient route of pointing the finger at " they have paved this road to unaffordable housing in our community by making it nearly impossible for local, small property owners to provide affordable housing options for working families.



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As lawmakers continue year after year to push extreme policies, our rents have become one of the most expensive in the nation. Housing operation costs are outpacing rent increases, forcing out people such as myself who have been providing apartments to low-income families at a rate they could

afford for decades.

As a Colorado native, I have dedicated my life to providing workforce and low-income housing with a mindful eye towards the community in which I also live. With inflation and rising costs devastating families in recent years, I can see why government officials want to do something drastic, but these regulations are only making matters worse by pushing out local owners and operators who are struggling with rising costs themselves.

For me, the handwriting was on the wall several years ago, and I sold all of our multi-family properties in Colorado and moved money to properties in other states.

Since then, the Denver City Council and the Colorado General Assembly have pushed through an endless stream of extreme regulations. While I actually support the intentions behind these policies — such as having a safe place to live, protection from unscrupulous landlords, trying to create more affordable housing and addressing climate change — it is their punitive approach that is not only not helping, but is making matters worse.

Energize Denver, while having the admirable goal of reducing our carbon footprint, has created a situation where current building owners have to retrofit buildings that already meet industry standards. These additional costs drive away investors that could build more housing, which would create supply. If they are not building new buildings, however, this causes a supply issue where rents will go higher. California is a perfect example of what regulations do to housing costs when new supply is restricted.

At the state legislature, adopted regulations that were supposed to help keep people in their homes have instead forced them into bankruptcy. The longer a tenant resides in a unit and isn't paying rent or getting help, their debt is growing. It takes so long to evict someone now that they might owe \$5,000 to \$6,000 at the end, creating a situation where filing bankruptcy is their only option. At a minimum, their credit is ruined. That results in higher

insurance, car payments and increased difficulty in finding replacement housing.

It is the dozens of punitive regulations like these that account for an estimated 40-50% of multifamily housing development costs. In the same vein as the Trump tariffs, the cost of these regulations is ultimately passed on to the consumer with higher rents.

A new study from MetroSight not only confirmed this but found it is working class families that pay the highest price. Eviction regulations alone account for 7.42% higher rent for families in low-income properties. Since there are fewer evictions in high-income properties, those renters only see a 4.14% increase.

Rather than learn from these mistakes, elected leaders continue to further these punitive policies which are only making matters worse. In order for Colorado and Denver to grow, they must repeal or amend these flawed regulations and create "" tax incentives to attract more development.

This isn't a new approach – even for Denver Democrats. Federico Peña did it. John Hickenlooper did it. Let's make reasonable and responsible laws that promote safety but also build businesses and create jobs. That is how states and cities prosper.

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