

Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy

The ***Residential Tenancies Act*** is the law that writes the rules for landlord-tenant relations in Ontario. This includes regulating of rent increases, restricting the reasons for eviction, imposing repair obligations, preventing harassment and creating a system to settle disputes.

This law was passed in 2006. Since then we have become aware of many ways in which the law is not good for tenants. When the Government of Ontario announced that it was consulting with the public on a [Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy](#), we thought that making [this law](#) better would be a good part of this strategy. We worked with other legal clinics and tenant groups to request changes to the law. We focussed on four general areas:

- Fair rent regulation
- Extending legal protection to more tenants
- Improving access to justice for tenants at the Landlord and Tenant Board
- Ensuring the quality of existing and future rental housing stock

Some of the important changes we recommended were:

- Applying rent increase rules to rental units even if they become vacant;
- Bringing back a government record of rents;
- Bringing “new buildings” (those first rented after November 1991!) under the rent increase rules;
- Giving the Landlord and Tenant Board the power to hear disputes by social housing tenants about what their rent is;
- Requiring the Landlord and Tenant Board to notify tenants of hearings instead of leaving this to their landlords;
- Making the rules about when claims expire the same for landlords and tenants;
- Giving the Landlord and Tenant Board the power to exempt lower-income people from having to pay Board filing fees.

The Board has now been given the power to exempt low-income people from paying fees, but the Government continues to rebuff our efforts to make changes on the larger issues. We will continue to push for these changes so that Ontario's tenants will have better protection in their struggle for decent, affordable housing.