

# BC ACORN

## STOP TENANT HARASSMENT AND STRENGTHEN RENT CONTROL

**The fight for justice is never easy.** Despite gains made under consecutive NDP governments, tenants in B.C. remain under attack as landlords continuously adapt to new regulations to maximize profits. Every victory is met with a new predatory tactic. When renovictions were banned in 2021, landlords turned to landlord-use evictions to circumvent rent control laws. In 2024, ACORN played a key role in banning landlord-use evictions in apartment buildings, only for landlords to ramp up new forms of tenant harassment and displacement.

The power imbalance between landlords and tenants in B.C. is stark, especially as more affordable rental housing is bought up by large financialized landlords and developers. **That's why ACORN's Stop Tenant Harassment and Keep Tenant Communities Intact campaigns fight to ensure tenants can stay in their homes long-term—and live free from harassment.**

Tenant harassment takes many forms. Landlords use threats of eviction and attempt to evict tenants without cause, they pressure tenants to sign so-called voluntary rent increases, conduct unnecessary suite inspections, and engage in rude and unprofessional behaviour. Some use aggressive pressure to force tenants to leave, while others refuse to complete repairs or cut off essential services like power or water.

**ACORN is fighting back to hold landlords accountable and demand strong protections for tenants across B.C.**

### Expand Tenant Access to Justice

#### **Create a Tenant Protection Program**

Access to tenant advocates must be expanded throughout the province based on population. Organizations that engage in proactive tenant organizing must be funded to increase tenant awareness of their rights and to collectively fight building-wide issues like Additional Rent Increases (ARIs) and demovictions.

#### **Make the RTB Fair**

Tenants facing eviction at the RTB must have access to an advocate. Those whose landlords attempt to pass repair costs onto them through ARIs must also be appointed an advocate.

#### **Legalize Tenant Organizing**

Some landlords use cease and desist letters, legal threats, or eviction threats for "disturbing the peace" to stop tenants from engaging in legal activities such as distributing notices. These tactics must be stopped to protect tenants' rights to organize.

## **Stop Tenant Harrassment**

### **Add Anti-Tenant Harassment Language to the Residential Tenancy Act:**

Tenants must have the right to take action against landlords who harass them. The definition of harassment must be broad enough to cover the various ways landlords, their representatives, or third-party 'inspection service' contractors intimidate tenants. Landlords found guilty of harassment must be prohibited from taking any retaliatory action against affected tenants.

### **Tighten Regulations on Unit Inspections and Tenant Inspection Services:**

Unit inspections must be conducted reasonably and for valid reasons. The increasing practice of repeated inspections targeting tenants—especially those paying below-market rents—is a form of harassment and a tactic to bypass rent control, pressuring tenants to move out.

### **End Voluntary Rent Increases:**

No tenant should be approached by a landlord and asked to voluntarily increase their rent.

### **Regulate Predatory Lease Buyouts:**

Landlords must be prevented from approaching tenants with one-time cash offers to move. These offers are often coercive and work against the long-term financial interests of tenants.

## **Expand Eviction Protections**

### **Stop Serial Evictors – Track Evictions**

The RTB portal currently used to track some types of Landlord-Use evictions must be expanded to include all types of evictions and Mutual Agreements to End Tenancy. Landlords who repeatedly use eviction notices to circumvent rent control and displace long-term tenants must be audited. RTB policy must be reformed so arbitrators consider previous unfounded eviction attempts, cash-for-keys offers, and harassment when assessing whether an eviction is in good faith. Landlords caught attempting evictions in bad faith must face penalties.

### **Review and Update Eviction Rules and Regulations:**

Tenants can face eviction for being a day late and \$1 short on rent, with only a five-day window to pay or accept eviction. The incentive to evict long-term tenants paying under market rents is too high to keep outdated rules and regulations that were designed for a much different housing market. It's past time to review sections of the RTA that deal with evictions.

## **Strengthen Rent Control**

### **Everything Paid to a Landlord Should Be Included in Rent Control Guidelines**

Landlords are increasing fees for services like parking and storage lockers to circumvent rent control. While rent increases are limited to 3% in 2025, parking fees might be raised by 100% with no restrictions. These loopholes must be closed.



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## Keep Tenant Communities Intact

New provincial housing legislation, Bill 47, requires municipalities to allow high-density development around transit hubs—also known as Transit-Oriented Areas (TOAs). Cities without strong rental replacement and tenant relocation policies **risk turning TOAs into Demolition Zones, where affordable housing is demolished** without adequate replacement, forcing low- and moderate-income tenants out of their communities.

The scale of the crisis is especially obvious in Surrey, where thousands of tenants in neighbourhoods like Whalley and Guildford face displacement as developers apply to redevelop purpose-built rentals. **ACORN's research shows that 3,886 affordable rental units—over 27% of Surrey's entire rental stock—are at risk.** Without stronger protections, Bill 47 will accelerate displacement, deepening the housing crisis.

**To prevent this, ACORN is calling for provincial tenant protections to ensure tenants can remain in their communities when redevelopment happens.**



## Keep Tenant Communities Intact Platform

Tenant-landlord power imbalances and the number of municipalities in B.C. lacking tenant representation at the municipal level makes it necessary for B.C. to mandate anti-displacement tenant protections province-wide. These protections must include:

### One-to-One Rental Replacement

- Ensure all tenants can move back into an apartment in their redeveloped building at the same rent they were paying before the redevelopment.
- Landlords or developers must provide the Province with a log of tenants' names, contact information, and lease details to ensure all eligible tenants are compensated.
- From the start of the redevelopment process, the Province must ensure that tenants and developers are fully aware of tenants' rights to remain in the community.

### Affordable Interim Housing

- Tenants must be informed of available housing options as part of the redevelopment process, including:
  - An apartment in the area of similar size. It cannot be left to tenants to find suitable housing on their own.
- Tenants must be compensated to cover the cost of temporarily relocating during redevelopment, including:
  - Financial assistance to cover moving costs
  - Rental top-ups lasting until the new development is complete, ensuring tenants' rent doesn't increase beyond provincial rent guidelines. This ensures tenants can afford to stay in their communities.

