

SUNY New Paltz Honors Program



“The Rent is Too Damn High”:

Why Renters Deserve More Affordable Housing Policies in the United States, Such As Good Cause Eviction

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Overview

Increasing the
Visibility of the
Housing Crisis

Skyrocketing
Rents and the
Impact

Existing Housing
Policies

The History of
Evictions

Good Cause
Eviction Law

Where to go from
Here

More than 1 in 5 Families

who rent in the United States spend half of their income on housing
(Desmond 2016).

Introduction: Increasing the Visibility of the Housing Crisis in the United States

- ❑ Eviction is estimated to impact millions of Americans each year (Broady 2021).
- ❑ Lack of reliable data on evictions (Hartman 2010).
- ❑ Policy change is needed from local, state, and federal government.



Image by: For the Many

The History of Evictions

Evictions in the 1930s

- ❑ Evictions during the Depression were rare (Desmond 2016).
- ❑ Communities banded together.
- ❑ Led to the “rent riots.”

AND

Evictions Today

- ❑ Evictions are seen as an individual problem.
- ❑ There is less communal outrage than previously seen in the 30s.
- ❑ Evictions can be “forced” by the landlord or go through the court system.

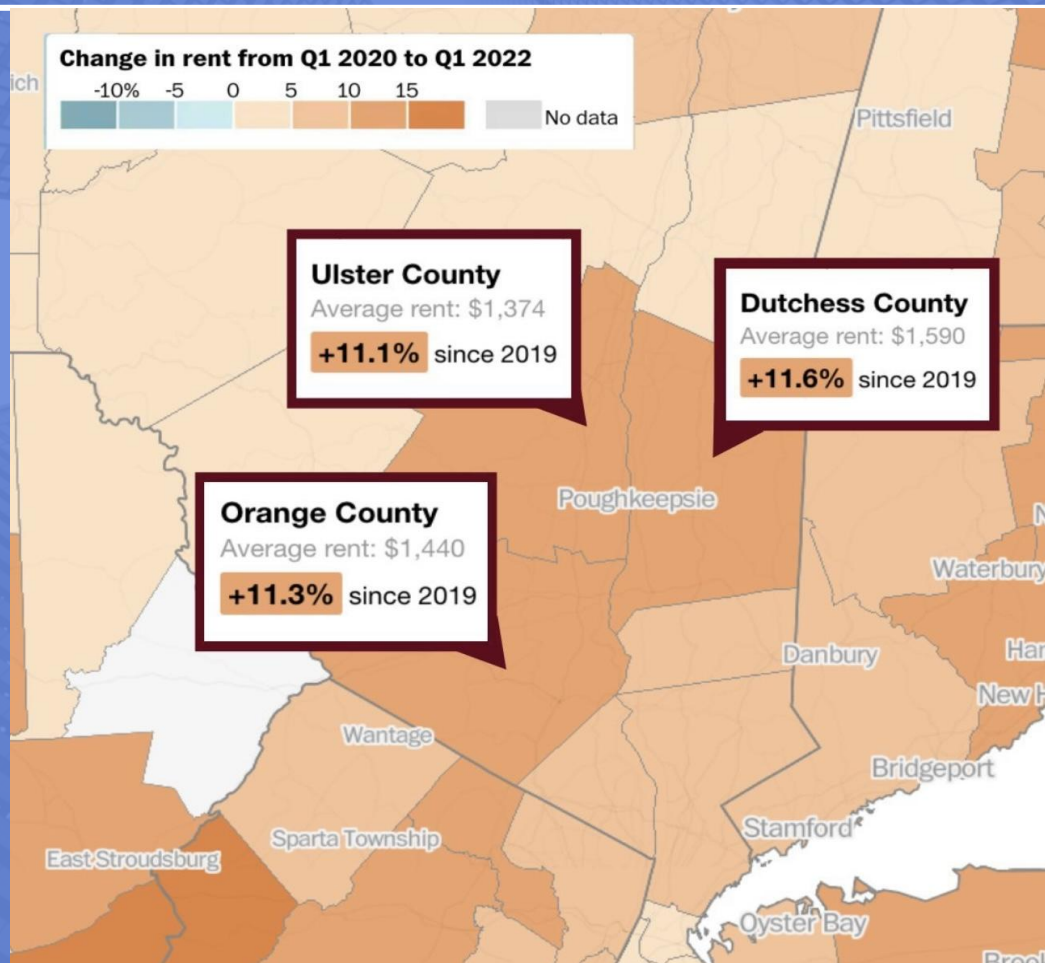


“

**Eviction is not merely a condition
of poverty; it is a cause of it too**
(Desmond 2016).

Skyrocketing Rents Result From

- Supply-Demand Mismatch
- Migration from cities to suburbs
- Historic events; Covid, Hurricane Sandy, and 9/11



The Impact of Evictions

- ❑ The poor, women, and people of color are the most likely demographics to be evicted.
- ❑ The housing crisis in the United States is also fueled by racism.
- ❑ “Eviction fallout is severe” (Desmond 2016).



Image by: For the Many

Forgive Our Rent



Good Cause Eviction

- ❑ Requires landlords to obtain an order by a judge in order to evict.
- ❑ Gives tenants who follow their leases a right to renew.
- ❑ Allows renters to advocate for themselves.
- ❑ Requires a judge to approve rent increases greater than 5%.



Image by: Through the Roof

Policy Rebuttals

- ❑ The debate transcends party lines.
- ❑ Landlords are fearful that they would have to cover unpaid rents.
- ❑ Landlords want less government control and personal choice regarding their private properties.

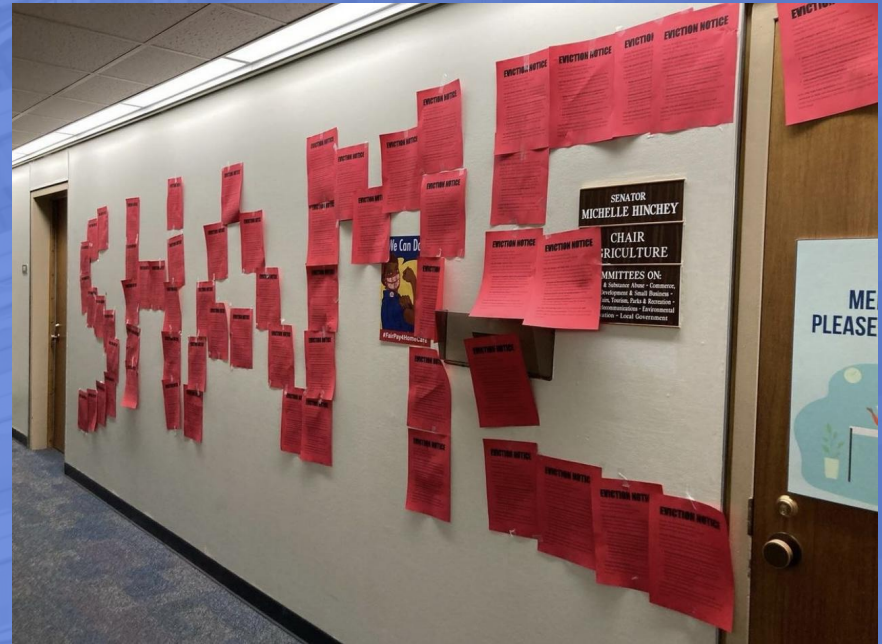


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Passage of the Law

Victory:

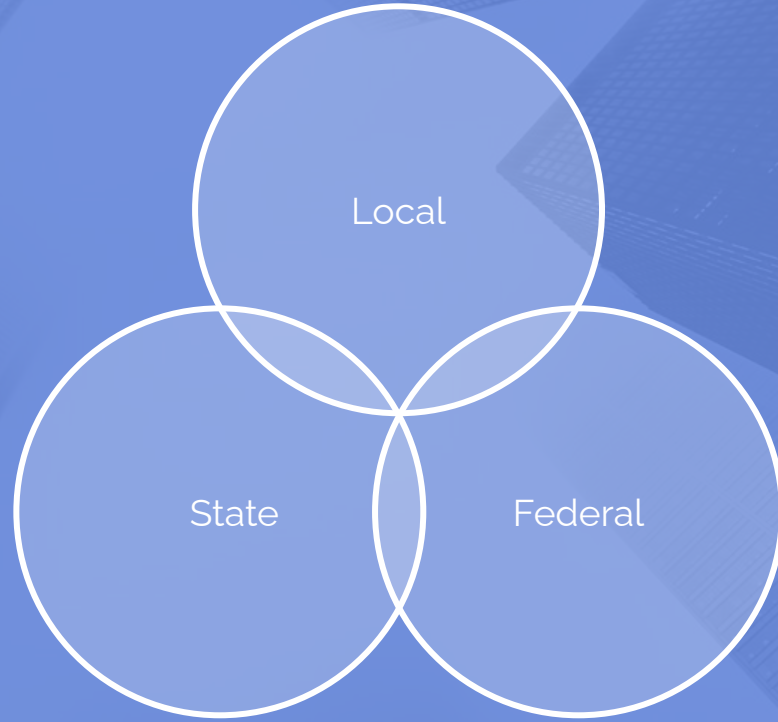
- ❑ Albany
- ❑ Poughkeepsie
- ❑ Kingston
- ❑ Newburgh
- ❑ Beacon

Defeat:

- ❑ New Paltz

Where to Go from Here

- ❑ In order to protect the rights of both tenants and landlords, local, state, and the federal governments must work together.



Potential Solutions

Federal Emergency Rental Assistance

- ❑ A one-time safety net for renters if unexpected situations arise, such as medical bills.

Housing Choice Voucher Program

- ❑ Helps families secure housing in the private renting market.
- ❑ Reduces likelihood of homelessness.

Legal Services in Housing Courts

- ❑ Legal representation in housing courts for renters.

Conclusion: A Deep-Rooted Problem Calls for Numerous Solutions

- ❑ Housing is a human right!
- ❑ Evictions are not an isolated problem, but a nation-wide governmental failure.
- ❑ There is action we can take at an individual level to put pressure on our elected officials to support progressive housing policies.
- ❑ We must work together to protect low-income community members of color.



Image by: Through the Roof

CREDITS

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THANK YOU!!
Any questions?