

Restoring Options in Occupancy Models (ROOM) Act



The Problem:

America is experiencing a growing housing crisis, especially in fast-growing metro areas and job centers. Many workers, seniors, and young people are being priced out of housing near where they work and live. Historically, single-room occupancy (SRO) or “co-living” housing provided some of the most affordable options on the private market. However, decades of restrictive zoning laws, building codes, and land use regulations have effectively eliminated or severely limited these housing types. As a result, the state has lost a key source of naturally affordable housing, contributing to rising rents, longer commutes, and limited housing choice.

The Bill



- Legalizes co-living (SRO) housing in all zones where residential use is allowed, including single-family, multifamily, and mixed-use areas.
- Requires municipalities to allow co-living “by right,” removing discretionary approval processes like special permits or public hearings.
- Limits local zoning and design restrictions so co-living is not treated more harshly than other housing types.
- Reduces parking requirements, especially near transit, to lower development costs.
- Allows adaptive reuse of existing buildings (e.g., offices, hotels) into co-living housing.
- Prohibits discriminatory occupancy rules based on income, family status, or relationships between tenants.
- Preempts local laws that conflict with the goal of expanding co-living housing options.

Why It Matters:

- Expands naturally affordable housing options without requiring new subsidies
- Increases overall housing supply, helping reduce upward pressure on rents across the market.
- Creates more flexible living arrangements for individuals who prioritize affordability, location, or community living.
- Supports redevelopment of underused buildings, making it easier to convert vacant commercial spaces into housing.
- Promotes walkable, transit-oriented communities and reduces urban sprawl.
- Restores housing choice by removing outdated and exclusionary regulations.

Contact Sam Hooper at shooper@ij.org for more information.