

Common Sense TOPA Reform Amendment Act of 2025

Why we need to protect and streamline TOPA

- **TOPA has been a bedrock component of tenant rights in the District since 1980.** At a time when affordable housing is at risk, we need to strengthen one of our most powerful housing rights replicated by cities and states around the country.
- **TOPA is a critical housing preservation tool.** By granting tenants a seat at the table during negotiations, TOPA aims to ensure housing security, tenant empowerment, and affordability, balanced with owners' property rights.
- **We can stabilize the market and attract new investment without abandoning one of our core principles.** The legislation is based on [recommendations from a Council-funded study](#) to comprehensively review TOPA from the perspective of tenants, owners, and other stakeholders.

Modernizes the TOPA process

- **Outlines consequences for bad actors who threaten the TOPA process** through coercion, retaliation, delay, or fraud. Impacted owners, tenants, or tenant associations may seek award of costs and reasonable attorney fees.
- **Expedites transaction timelines**, eliminating the 45-day appeal period after a Notice of Transfer.
- **Directs DHCD to create standard templates for agreements**, including for tenant buyouts.
- **Creates a public TOPA Transparency Portal** that will address a current lack of good data on TOPA and help all of us better understand outcomes.
- **Streamlines and updates TOPA** by removing ambiguous language.
- **Exempts all new residential construction from TOPA for the first three years** to facilitate investment in new housing.

Expands support for tenants

- **Establishes a certification for tenant support providers (TSPs) and qualified purchasers** to facilitate better negotiations and deter bad actors who seek to undermine the TOPA process. DHCD will be required to maintain a public list of certified TSPs, provided to tenants alongside a Notice of Sale. DHCD would also maintain a list of pre-vetted qualified purchasers that tenants may assign rights to and use this process to recruit new investors to the District.
- **Creates a "cooling off period" to level the playing field.** To minimize predatory actors engaging with tenants, offers of sale would only be shared with tenants, DHCD, and approved TSPs within the first 15 days after a notice of sale. In addition, purchase rights could not be assigned to any potential buyer within the first 45 days, unless the tenant has first met with a certified TSP to ensure they are aware of their rights and their options.