

D.C. Office of the Tenant Advocate
Historical Comparison of the “Rent Control CPI” and
the Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment through 2019

By March 1st of each year, the Rental Housing Commission publishes what the standard annual rent increase caps will be for units under rent control for the following “rent control year.” The rent control year starts on May 1st and ends the following calendar year on April 30th. The “rent control CPI” is based on the Consumer Price Index for Workers (CPI-W) for the greater DC metropolitan area, as published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For tenants who are elderly (age 62 and over) or have a disability, the standard rent increase cap is the CPI-W, the Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (SS COLA), or five (5) percent, **whichever is least**. In order to qualify for this lower cap, the tenant must have registered their “elderly” or “disability” status with the Rent Administrator’s office. For all other tenants, the standard rent increase cap is equal to either the CPI-W + two (2) percent, or ten (10) percent, **whichever is less**.

Please note there was no lower cap on the standard rent increase for elderly and disability tenants before Law 16-145, the “Rent Control Reform Amendment Act of 2006,” effective August 5, 2006. Law 21-239, the “Elderly and Tenants with Disabilities Protection Amendment Act of 2016,” effective April 7, 2017, added the SS COLA to that cap. Also note that prior to Law 16-145, the rent could be increased once every six months.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Rent Control CPI-W</u> <u>(May – April)</u>	<u>SS COLA</u> <u>(Jan – Dec)</u>
1985	4.4%	3.5%
1986	4.0%	3.1%
1987	1.6%	1.3%
1988	4.7%	4.2%
1989	4.6%	4.0%
1990	5.6%	4.7%
1991	5.4%	5.4%
1992	2.7%	3.7%
1993	2.9%	3.0%
1994	2.1%	2.6%
1995	1.7%	2.8%
1996	1.9%	2.6%
1997	2.8%	2.9%
1998	1.8%	2.1%
1999	1.0%	1.3%
2000	2.1%	2.5%
2001	3.3%	3.5%
2002	2.6%	2.6%
2003	2.1%	1.4%
2004	2.9%	2.1%
2005	2.7%	2.7%
2006	4.2%	4.1%
2007	3.5%	3.3%
2008	3.4%	2.3%
2009	4.8%	5.8%
2010	0.05%	0.0%
2011	2.2%	0.0%
2012	3.6%	3.6%
2013	2.2%	1.7%
2014	1.4%	1.5%
2015	1.5%	1.7%
2016	0.0%	0.0%
2017	1.1%	0.3%
2018	1.4%	2.0%
2019	2.3%	2.8%