

Institutional Investors and Single-Family Housing: In Brief

Updated July 24, 2026

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

R49015

Contents

Introduction	1
Who Owns SF Houses?	2
What Are Institutional Investors?	3
What Challenges Exist in Measuring Ownership?	4
How Many SF Units Do <i>Large</i> Investors Own?	4
What Are Some Key Policy Issues?	6
What Types of Proposals to Limit Large Investors Have Been Considered?	9
How Does the 21 st Century ROAD to Housing Act Address Institutional Investors?	11

Figures

Figure 1. Owner- and Renter-Occupied One-Unit Properties	2
Figure 2. One-Unit Homes by Owners' Number of Other Homes Owned.....	2

Tables

Table 1. Selected Bills to Regulate Institutional Investors in the 119 th Congress	10
---	----

Contacts

Author Information.....	13
-------------------------	----

Introduction

In the years following the financial crisis of 2007-2009, some large institutional investors began to purchase single-family (SF) homes to hold as rental properties.¹ Unlike *owner-occupants* who reside in the SF homes they own, investors typically rent their units to generate income (or renovate them to resell for profit).² Most investors in SF homes traditionally have been (and still largely are) smaller individual or corporate entities that each own relatively small numbers of SF homes. As large institutional investors have increased their purchases of SF homes, Congress, the President, and other stakeholders have expressed concerns about these investors' influence on market outcomes.³

The term *institutional investor*, as used in this report, refers to any of certain larger legal entities (as opposed to individuals and smaller such entities)—such as legal trusts, limited liability companies (LLCs), and various types of asset managers (e.g., private equity firms, hedge funds)—that choose to invest in real estate assets as part of their investment strategies and that own large numbers of SF properties. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that, as of 2011, no single investor owned more than 1,000 SF homes, but that by 2022, more than 30 separate investors may have each owned more than 1,000 homes.⁴ Although the ownership share of SF units by large institutional investors has risen, the overall share of SF homes they own remains small on a national basis (between 3% and 5% of SF rental homes and therefore a smaller share of all SF homes, depending on definitions and data sources).

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act (H.R. 6644), a wide-ranging housing bill that became law (P.L. 119-101) in July 2026, contains provisions limiting institutional investors' purchases of SF homes (§1001).

This In Brief report provides an overview of institutional investor participation in SF rental markets, structured around the frequently asked questions (FAQs) below.

- Who owns SF houses?
- What are institutional investors?
- What challenges exist in measuring ownership?
- How many SF units do large investors own?
- What are some key policy issues?
- What types of proposals to limit large investors have been considered?
- How does the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act (now P.L. 119-101) address institutional investors?

¹ While single-family (SF) homes are often thought of as homes that consist of only one dwelling unit, definitions can vary depending on the specific context. For the purposes of housing finance, for example, SF homes include properties with up to four dwelling units (i.e., duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes).

² Approximately 30% of occupied rental units are single-unit properties. CRS calculations using U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B25032: Tenure by Units in Structure," in *American Community Survey 1-Year Data*, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2024.B25032?q=Table+B25032>.

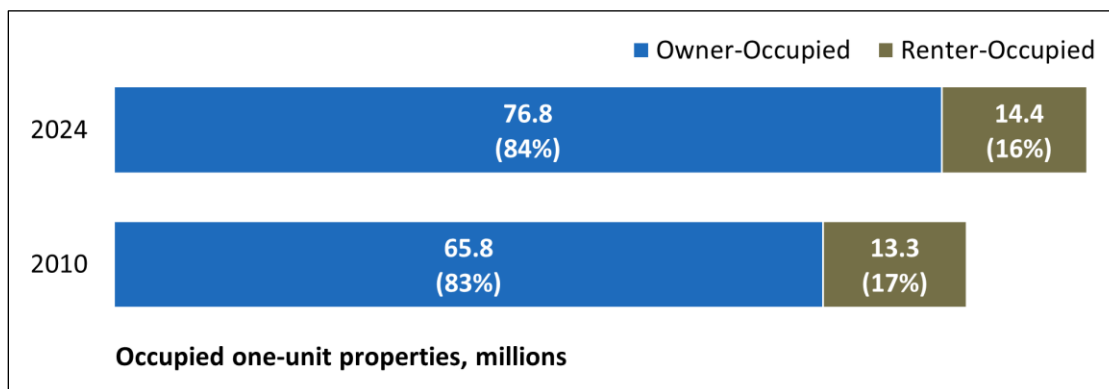
³ For example, see Executive Order 14376 of January 20, 2026, "Stopping Wall Street from Competing with Main Street," 91 *Federal Register* 3023, January 23, 2026, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/01/23/2026-01424/stopping-wall-street-from-competing-with-main-street-homebuyers>.

⁴ U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Rental Housing: Information on Institutional Investment in Single-Family Homes*, GAO-24-106643, May 2024, pp. 10, 13, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-24-106643.pdf>.

Who Owns SF Houses?

Most SF homes are owner-occupied. According to American Community Survey (ACS) data, approximately 84% of the nearly 91.2 million occupied one-unit properties in the United States were owner-occupied in 2024, while 16% were renter-occupied. These shares are similar to those in 2010, as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Owner- and Renter-Occupied One-Unit Properties
2024 and 2010

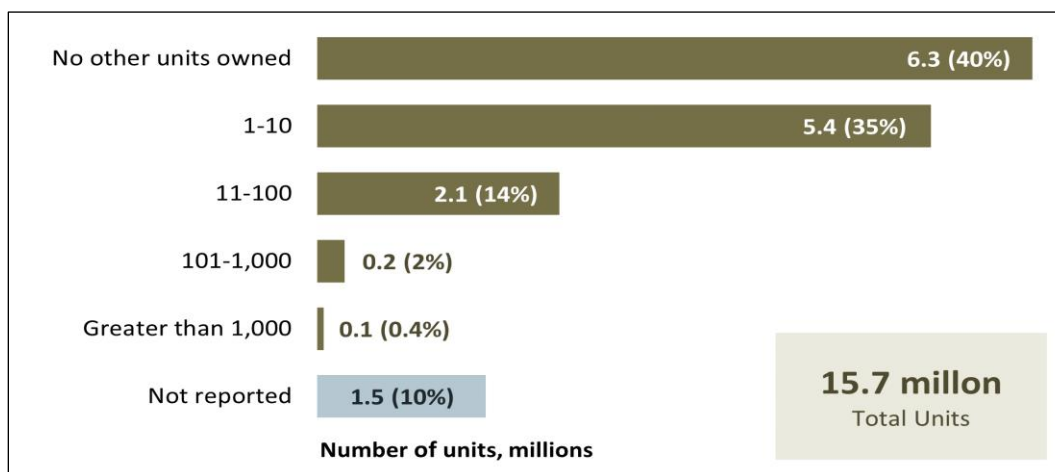


Source: Created by CRS, calculated using data from U.S. Census Bureau, "Table B25032: Tenure by Units in Structure," in *American Community Survey 1-Year Data*, 2010 and 2024.

Notes: Properties include both attached and detached homes. The 2024 ACS data were the most recent available as of the date of this report; 2010 is the earliest year for which ACS data are available.

The Census Bureau's Rental Housing Finance Survey (RHFS) provides rental unit ownership data, reporting 15.7 million one-unit rental units in 2024 (the most recent data available as of the date of this report). Three-quarters of these are held by owners with 10 or fewer additional units, as shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2. One-Unit Homes by Owners' Number of Other Homes Owned
2024



Source: Created by CRS using data from U.S. Census Bureau, *Rental Housing Finance Survey*, <https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/rhfs/#/>.

What Are Institutional Investors?

An *institutional investor* in the context of the SF housing market can be defined in different ways. Various regulatory frameworks, research entities, and legislative proposals use the term differently. The term may refer to characteristics such as corporate status, ownership scale, investment structure, or regulatory jurisdiction. The term is frequently (and informally) used to describe certain firms that own a large (not consistently specified) number of SF properties. Such firms—for example, private equity funds, private credit funds, mutual funds, exchange-traded funds, or certain real estate investment trusts (REITs)—typically pool funding from individual investors to deploy across a range of assets with a goal to generate investment returns.⁵ Institutional investors may invest directly in SF units or indirectly via affiliated operating companies and investment vehicles.

Asset managers or their affiliates are among the entities that own the largest number of SF homes. For example, alternative asset managers (i.e., managers of private funds, also referred to as “private equity firms”) Blackstone and Pretium Partners own and manage approximately 63,600 and 82,000 SF homes, respectively.⁶ Amherst Group, a real estate investment, development, and operating company, owns approximately 50,000 SF homes. REITs such as Invitation Homes and American Homes 4 Rent own approximately 86,000 and 61,000 SF homes, respectively.⁷ For comparative perspectives on alternative asset manager involvement across selected industries, see CRS In Focus IF13214, *Private Equity in Selected Industries: Policy Background*, by Eva Su.

One class of investors that increased its investments in distressed SF properties following the 2008 foreclosure crisis is REITs.⁸ REITs are institutional investors primarily engaged in the ownership of real estate assets that, by distributing at least 90% of taxable income to shareholders (and satisfying other legal requirements), avoid being required to pay corporate-level taxes.⁹ REITs (and other institutional investors) have more available cash to purchase distressed SF properties (from banks and credit unions), clear lien titles, renovate homes in disrepair, and make them habitable in less time relative to purchasers that rely on loan financing. Because per-unit construction and maintenance costs decline as property ownership volume increases, some REITs (and non-REITs) have also invested in *build-to-rent* (BTR) projects—the development of new communities made up of SF homes for rent rather than for sale. BTR production levels, while growing, are estimated to represent less than 10% of SF unit completions.¹⁰

⁵ For more details on the types of funds listed, see CRS Report R47053, *Private Equity and Capital Markets Policy*, by Eva Su; CRS In Focus IF12511, *Hedge Funds: Background and Policy Issues*, by Eva Su; CRS In Focus IF12642, *Private Credit: Trends and Policy Issues*, by Eva Su; CRS Report R47309, *Money Market Mutual Funds: Policy Concerns and Reform Options*, by Eva Su; and CRS Report R45318, *Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs): Issues for Congress*, by Eva Su.

⁶ Blackstone, “Our Commitment to Being Responsible Owners,” March 2025, <https://www.blackstone.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/05/Blackstone-Housing-Market-Myth-vs.-Fact.pdf>, and Pretium, “Single-Family Rentals,” <https://pretium.com/strategies/sfr>.

⁷ Invitation Homes Inc., Form 10-K, for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, p. 8, <https://d18rn0p25nwr6d.cloudfront.net/CIK-0001687229/78184bbd-f77f-4587-9adb-0fcdbe950fb3.pdf>, and American Homes 4 Rent, “Investors,” <https://investors.amh.com/home/>.

⁸ See CRS In Focus IF12225, *Single-Family Market Rents and Institutional Investors*, by Darryl E. Getter.

⁹ CRS Report R44421, *Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act (FIRPTA): Overview and Recent Tax Revisions*, by Jane G. Gravelle.

¹⁰ Fannie Mae, *Multifamily Economic and Market Commentary: Build-to-Rent Overview*, October 2024, <https://www.fanniemae.com/media/53426/display>.

Given the lack of a standard definition of *institutional investor*, many bills that address institutional investors in SF housing have their own definitions.¹¹ The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act (P.L. 119-101), enacted in July 2026, generally defines large institutional investors as for-profit companies that own at least 350 homes.

What Challenges Exist in Measuring Ownership?

No single data source provides authoritative and comprehensive information on SF rental property ownership.¹² Many researchers and industry analysts use property records to obtain information on ownership of SF homes. However, because investors have multiple options to purchase real estate—such as direct property acquisitions, joint ownership with local operators or via subsidiaries, or investments in real estate funds (including certain securitized investment structures)—measuring institutional investor ownership by examining property records is challenging. REITs, for example, may invest in portfolios of real estate assets, with investors owning shares of the portfolio instead of individual properties. When ownership is in the form of shares, property records may be less informative.

Other reporting channels that may provide some information on SF property ownership (e.g., investment managers' Securities and Exchange Commission [SEC] filings, tax records) may also be fragmented when ownership is indirect. Furthermore, the SEC's reporting framework generally focuses on securities-related transactions and does not typically include granular information on individual SF property holdings. The Census Bureau's RHFS surveys rental property owners and managers on rental property characteristics, including some owner characteristics, but is also subject to limitations that may obscure the ultimate ownership of a property or an owner's portfolio size.¹³

How Many SF Units Do *Large* Investors Own?

Despite measurement challenges, some researchers have estimated the number and share of investor-purchased SF homes, with some attempting to categorize institutional investors by size category. Some data sources estimate the number of SF homes purchased by institutional investors during a given time period (e.g., the last quarter or year), while others estimate the overall number of SF properties currently owned by institutional investors. These data sources, discussed below, vary in their specific definitions, time periods, and estimation methodologies.

Examples of SF unit purchase estimates over a given time period include the following:

- Cotality, a real estate data analytics firm, considers a buyer to be an investor if it owns three or more properties. Investors are classified as *small* if they own fewer than 10 properties, *medium* if they own 10-99 properties, *large* if they own 100-999 properties, and *mega* if they own at least 1,000 properties. For the month of December 2025, Cotality reported that about 30% of SF homes were purchased by investors, up from about 18% in December 2018. Approximately 14% of SF

¹¹ The legal definition of *investment company* as stated in the Investment Company Act of 1940 (P.L. 76-768) does not encompass all institutional investors that may invest in SF units.

¹² See Stephanie Kestelman et al., *Towards a Methodology for Measuring Rental Property Ownership in the United States*, National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 35258, May 2026, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w35258>.

¹³ Stephanie Kestelman et al., *Towards a Methodology for Measuring Rental Property Ownership in the United States*, pp. 6-7.

homes were purchased by small investors, 11% by medium investors, 3% by large investors, and 3% by mega investors.¹⁴ (The approximately 70% share of remaining SF buyers is mostly composed of owner-occupants and owners of second or vacation homes.)

- Realtor.com defines an *investor* as an absentee owner with a name that includes certain terms designating different business structures (e.g., LLP, LP, LLC, GP, or Trust)¹⁵; it attempts to exclude certain types of entities such as homebuilders, government entities, and financial institutions. These data do not include small investors that are not registered under a company name. In a March 2026 report, Realtor.com defined small investors as those with fewer than 10 purchases over the years 2015-2025, medium investors as those with 10-99 purchases, large investors with 100-349 purchases, and institutional investors as those with 350 or more purchases over that time period. The report finds that, of homes purchased by investors between 2015 and 2025, small investors accounted for 53% of purchases, medium investors for 27%, large investors for 8%, and institutional investors for 12%.¹⁶
- Redfin periodically reports on SF home purchases by investors in 39 metro areas. Investors are identified using specific tags (e.g., LLC, Inc., Trust, Corp., Homes) or ownership codes on purchasing deeds (e.g., association, corporate trustee, company, joint venture, corporate trust). However, this approach may inadvertently flag purchases made through family trusts for personal use, which may also be a common issue for other data sources. For the first quarter of 2026, Redfin found that investors purchased 19% of SF homes sold, down from a peak of over 20% in 2022, but up from the 6%-8% range in the early 2000s.¹⁷ These Redfin data do not distinguish between investors of different sizes.

Following are examples of estimates of the *total* number of SF rental units held by large investors:

- Census Bureau data from the 2024 RHFS show that three-quarters of one-unit rental homes are owned by entities with 10 or fewer properties and that less than 2% of one-unit rentals are owned by entities with over 100 properties. (Nearly 10% of units were owned by entities that did not report on other unit ownership.)
- GAO, using estimates from the Urban Institute, found that as of 2022, investors with more than 1,000 homes owned about 3% of all SF rental homes.¹⁸

¹⁴ Cotality, “Investors Maintain 30% Market Share Entering 2026,” February 12, 2026, <https://www.cotality.com/press-releases/home-investor-report-q4-2025>.

¹⁵ “LLP” stands for “limited liability partnership,” LP stands for “limited partnership,” and “GP” stands for “general partnership.”

¹⁶ Jake Krimmel and Hannah Jones, “The Shrinking Institutional Investor Footprint: National Trends and Local Concentration,” *Realtor.com*, March 13, 2026, <https://www.realtor.com/research/corporate-investors-march-2026/>.

¹⁷ Dana Anderson, “Investor Home Purchases Fall to Lowest Level Since 2020,” *Redfin*, May 28, 2026, <https://www.redfin.com/news/investor-report-q1-2026/>.

¹⁸ GAO, *Rental Housing: Information on Institutional Investment in Single-Family Homes*, GAO-24-106643, and Laurie Goodman et al., *A Profile of Institutional Investor-Owned Single-Family Rental Properties*, Urban Institute, April 2023, <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/A%20Profile%20of%20Institutional%20Investor%E2%80%93Owned%20Single-Family%20Rental%20Properties.pdf>.

- A 2026 analysis from John Burns Research & Consulting estimated that investors with more than 350 homes own about 5% of SF rental homes.¹⁹

Collectively, these estimates show that large institutional investors hold a relatively small overall share of SF units. However, institutional investor ownership is not evenly distributed nationally but may be concentrated in certain locations and neighborhoods. For example, institutional investors were estimated in 2024 to hold about 25% of SF rental homes in the Atlanta metro area.²⁰

What Are Some Key Policy Issues?

Many questions have been raised about the effects of growing institutional investor participation in SF housing markets. These include questions about effects on rents, homeownership, tenants, and market liquidity. Below is a brief review of those issues and some related research.²¹

- **Implications for SF rents.** Rents and house prices have generally been increasing for the last decade and a half, since the end of the 2007-2009 recession and accompanying housing market turmoil. The effects that institutional investors particularly have on rents in areas where their SF purchases are concentrated depends on their specific activities and underlying market dynamics. For example, institutional investors could increase rents as a result of making overall improvements to existing rental properties and neighborhoods.²² Rents could also stabilize or decrease as institutional investors increase the supply of rental units or benefit from *economies of scale*, meaning that their per-unit costs (e.g., for new construction, substantial renovations of existing rental stock, marketing, routine maintenance, repairs) decline as their inventories of SF income-generating units grow.²³ Although some research finds evidence that institutional investors can exercise market power to raise rents, such increases may be constrained by other factors, such as increases in the supply of rental units.²⁴ Notably, market fundamentals still influence rents. A GAO study of six metropolitan areas—composed of high-growth, desirable locations strategically targeted by institutional investors—shows that all experienced population growth over 2018-2024, accompanied by increases in median rents, total SF units (rental or owner-occupied), and total rental units (SF and multifamily).²⁵ Rising rents

¹⁹ See Chris Nebenzahl et al., *The Housing Bill That Will Make Affordability Worse, Not Better*, John Burns Research & Consulting, March 6, 2026, <https://jbrec.com/insights/21st-century-road-to-housing-act-impact/>.

²⁰ GAO, *Rental Housing: Information on Institutional Investment in Single-Family Homes*, GAO-24-106643, pp. 15-16.

²¹ For an overview of research into the effects of institutional investors on renters and homebuyers, see GAO, *Rental Housing: Information on Institutional Investment in Single-Family Homes*, GAO-24-106643. Note that research on this topic varies in terms of methodologies and factors such as the definitions of institutional investors, geographic location, and time periods.

²² Umit G. Gurun et al., “Do Wall Street Landlords Undermine Renters’ Welfare?” *Review of Financial Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1 (January 2023), <https://academic.oup.com/rfs/article-abstract/36/1/70/6550515>.

²³ Joshua Coven, “The Impact of Institutional Investors on Homeownership and Neighborhood Access,” *SSRN*, October 31, 2025, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4554831>.

²⁴ Felipe Barbieri and Gregory Dobbels, *Market Power and the Welfare Effects of Institutional Landlords*, March 30, 2026, https://felipebarbieri.com/files/Barbieri_Felipe_JMP.pdf.

²⁵ GAO, *Rental Housing: Institutional Investor Ownership of Single-Family Rental Homes*, GAO-26-108675, March 24, 2026, p. 11, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-26-108675>, and Ingrid Gould Ellen and Laurie Goodman, *Single-* (continued...)

due to investor pricing power would be more obvious if population growth had been stagnant or declining, particularly if the supply of SF rentals had also decreased.²⁶ However, because population growth also led to increased demand for (and supply of) renovated or newly constructed SF units and neighborhood improvements over this period, market fundamentals—and not solely investors’ market power—influenced rents in various rental markets.²⁷

- Implications for homeownership and SF house prices.** As noted previously, institutional investors began purchasing SF homes in the years after the 2007-2009 financial crisis, when the number of foreclosed properties was high and house prices were declining in many areas. Research suggests that institutional investors’ SF unit purchases contributed to stabilization and recovery of house prices in those years in the areas where they were most active.²⁸ While institutional investors may have increased the supply of SF rentals, the trade-off may be fewer SF houses available for owner-occupants and higher home sale prices.²⁹ Institutional investors’ comparative advantage in purchasing properties could supplant owner-occupants in some markets and reduce their homeownership opportunities.³⁰ Specifically, the ability to make all-cash offers or use technology to quickly identify and bid on properties could allow institutional investors to outpace individual property buyers. However, the extent that institutional investors and owner-occupants compete for the same units is unclear. Some research suggests that institutional investors often target homes in need of more rehabilitation than a typical individual homebuyer can afford to purchase and quickly renovate for occupation.³¹ Some research also finds that institutional investor activities led to higher house prices and reduced affordability, particularly for first-time homebuyers.³² Meanwhile, the Federal

Family Rentals: Trends and Policy Recommendations, The Hamilton Project, November 2023, pp. 13-14, 22, https://www.hamiltonproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/20231103_THP_SingleFamilyRentals_Proposal.pdf.

²⁶ For more information about price-setting power, see N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, 10th ed. (Cengage, 2023).

²⁷ The GAO report, *Rental Housing: Institutional Investor Ownership of Single-Family Rental Homes*, GAO-26-108675, does not present a formal empirical identification strategy that distinguishes between demand and supply shifts.

²⁸ GAO, *Rental Housing: Information on Institutional Investment in Single-Family Homes*, GAO-24-106643, pp. 18-19.

²⁹ Institutional investors could also depress local housing market prices if, for example, they sold a large proportion of their SF rental portfolio at once.

³⁰ Laurie Goodman and Edward Golding, “Institutional Investors Have a Comparative Advantage in Purchasing Homes That Need Repair,” Urban Institute, October 20, 2021, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/institutional-investors-have-comparative-advantage-purchasing-homes-need-repair>, and Coven, “The Impact of Institutional Investors on Homeownership and Neighborhood Access.”

³¹ Goodman and Golding, “Institutional Investors Have a Comparative Advantage in Purchasing Homes That Need Repair”; Edward J. Pinto and Tobias Peter, *Rehabilitating Housing Supply: Evidence from an Institutional Investor’s Acquisition, Renovation, and Market Position*, American Enterprise Institute, April 15, 2026, <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/rehabilitating-housing-supply-evidence-from-an-institutional-investors-acquisition-renovation-and-market-position/>; and GAO, *Rental Housing: Information on Institutional Investment in Single-Family Homes*, pp. 21-22.

³² See Barbieri and Dobbels, *Market Power and the Welfare Effects of Institutional Landlords*, and Coven, “The Impact of Institutional Investors on Homeownership and Neighborhood Access.” One study attributes the market outcomes to the activities of *small and medium-sized* institutional investors, defined as primarily local with approximately two-thirds of their entire portfolios of SF rentals located in one metropolitan statistical area. See Carlos Garriga et al., “The Economic Effects of Real Estate Investors,” *Real Estate Economics*, vol. 51, no. 3 (May 2023), pp. 655-685.

Reserve Bank of Philadelphia examined selected housing markets and found that the participation of large investors (i.e., SF-REITs) on local house price growth was modest.³³ Notably, the abovementioned GAO study shows that homeownership rates increased in four of the six metropolitan areas with high rates of institutional investor activity but fell in areas with lower population growth.³⁴ Therefore, market fundamentals (e.g., buyer preferences for move-in ready versus fixer-uppers and population growth patterns)—and not solely large investors’ market power—influenced housing market outcomes.

- **Landlord practices.** A number of studies have suggested that larger landlords are more likely to file eviction notices than smaller landlords. However, research on eviction filing outcomes is limited.³⁵ Numerous media reports and other accounts describe poor maintenance practices among institutional investors;³⁶ however, formal research comparing institutional investors’ landlord practices to those of smaller landlords is largely nonexistent.³⁷
- **Liquidity in SF housing markets.** Efforts to restrict institutional investor participation can affect liquidity in SF housing markets. Although economists view *liquidity* from various perspectives, the concept generally refers to the ability to quickly trade assets without having to purchase at premium prices or sell at deep discounts. In SF markets, liquidity may refer to the ease and speed that houses can sell without significant list price changes. In contrast to liquid markets, SF markets are considered *thin* because units trade in low volumes (as owners typically buy and hold these assets for several years), at irregular intervals, and the time from listing to closing may take five to six months in a balanced market.³⁸ The resale market for foreclosures can be even more illiquid, as many foreclosed properties that need serious repairs may sell at steep discounts. Institutional investors can enhance liquidity in SF markets given their financial resources to purchase and renovate distressed properties within reasonable time frames for reoccupation.³⁹ Restrictions on institutional investors’ participation, therefore, may decrease liquidity in some SF markets and prolong property vacancy rates, which may also diminish local tax revenues. Alternatively, policies that promote antitrust enforcement of suspected anticompetitive practices by institutional investors may be less likely to

³³ For information on the impact of SF-REITs on house prices, housing supply, and homeownership, see Marco Giacoletti et al., *Single-Family REITs and Local Housing Markets*, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Working Paper 25-37, November 2025, <https://www.philadelphiafed.org/-/media/FRBP/Assets/working-papers/2025/wp25-37.pdf>.

³⁴ See GAO, *Rental Housing: Institutional Investor Ownership of Single-Family Rental Homes*, GAO-26-108675, p. 11.

³⁵ See Ellen and Goodman, *Single-Family Rentals: Trends and Policy Recommendations*, pp. 14-15, and GAO, *Rental Housing: Information on Institutional Investment in Single-Family Homes*, GAO-26-106643, pp. 24-25.

³⁶ See, for example, U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Banking, *How Private Equity Landlords Are Changing the Housing Market*, 117th Cong., 1st sess., October 21, 2021, S. Hrg. 117-667, <https://www.congress.gov/event/117th-congress/senate-event/330780/text>, and U.S. Congress, House Committee on Financial Services, *Where Have All the Houses Gone? Private Equity, Single-Family Rentals, and America’s Neighborhoods*, 117th Cong., 2nd sess., June 28, 2022, <https://www.congress.gov/event/117th-congress/house-event/114969/text>.

³⁷ See Ellen and Goodman, *Single-Family Rentals: Trends and Policy Recommendations*, p. 13.

³⁸ Freddie Mac, “Economic, Housing and Mortgage Market Outlook—November 2024,” November 26, 2024, <https://www.freddiemac.com/research/forecast/20241126-us-economy-remains-resilient-with-strong-q3-growth>.

³⁹ See Rohan Ganduri et al., “Tracing the Source of Liquidity for Distressed Housing Markets,” *Real Estate Economics*, vol. 51, no. 2 (March 2023), pp. 408-449.

compromise liquidity as much as various restrictions on institutional investors' SF market participation.⁴⁰

What Types of Proposals to Limit Large Investors Have Been Considered?

A number of bills have been introduced in the 119th Congress to attempt to limit institutional investor purchases of SF homes. These bills differ in their approaches, listed below.

- **Outright prohibitions.** Some bills would prohibit certain investors from acquiring SF homes. These include stand-alone prohibitions and amendments to securities law or antitrust law to prohibit certain acquisitions.
- **Tax policy.** Some bills would attempt to use federal tax policy to discourage institutional investors from purchasing SF homes. These bills either would impose new taxes on certain entities that own more than a specified number of homes or would withhold existing tax deductions from such entities.
- **Prohibiting federal mortgage support.** Some federal agencies, such as the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), insure mortgages made by private lenders. In addition, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac (collectively known as “the Enterprises”) purchase mortgages that meet their standards and retain the default risks linked to those mortgages. Some bills would ensure that institutional investors do not receive federal backing to purchase SF homes, such as mortgages insured by FHA or purchased by the Enterprises.⁴¹
- **Placing requirements on distressed mortgage and foreclosed property sales.** *Distressed (or non-performing)* mortgages are those on which borrowers have missed payments or progressed to default. If attempts to get a defaulted mortgage to reperform are unsuccessful, it may go to *foreclosure*, meaning that the home (used as collateral for the mortgage loan) is repossessed and resold; the proceeds after resale are used to reimburse the losses.⁴² FHA, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac all sell properties acquired via foreclosures on mortgages that they had guaranteed. These entities may also choose to sell nonperforming mortgages rather than pursue foreclosure. Some bills would codify restrictions on sales of

⁴⁰ See Joe Gyourko, “The Ripple Effects of Banning Institutional Purchases of Single-Family Rentals,” Brookings, February 23, 2026, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-ripple-effects-of-banning-institutional-purchases-of-single-family-rentals/>.

⁴¹ Institutional investors already face limited access to federally subsidized mortgage financing to purchase SF properties. Only owner-occupants can use FHA-insured SF mortgages; they are not available to investors. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, collectively known as “the Enterprises,” primarily purchase SF mortgages made to owner-occupants. While the Enterprises purchase SF mortgages made to investors, the investor must not have more than 10 financed properties. FHA and the Enterprises also have multifamily mortgage programs; these can be used for some types of multifamily projects that consist of SF rental homes, such as build-to-rent (BTR) developments that consist of SF units. In addition, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac conducted a pilot program that provided some support to investors in SF rental markets, including larger institutional investors, that was discontinued in 2018. See Federal Housing Finance Agency, “Federal Housing Finance Agency Determination on Enterprise Activity in the Single-Family Rental Market,” <https://web.archive.org/web/20220201054653/https://www.fhfa.gov/Media/PublicAffairs/PublicAffairsDocuments/SFR-Decision-8212018.pdf>, and CRS In Focus IF12225, *Single-Family Market Rents and Institutional Investors*, by Darryl E. Getter.

⁴² CRS Report R48713, *Mortgage Servicing and Selected Policy Issues*, by Darryl E. Getter.

- distressed mortgages or inventories of foreclosed SF properties by federal agencies and the Enterprises to facilitate more resales to owner-occupants.
- **Data collection, monitoring, investigations.** Other bills would involve federal data collection or monitoring of SF home purchases, such as directing the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to monitor such purchases and investigate “excessive” housing purchases or directing HUD to establish a tenant outreach resource where tenants in properties owned by large institutional investors can notify federal agencies about disputes.
 - **Antitrust.** Some bills would take an antitrust approach by modifying premerger notification requirements under the Clayton Antitrust Act (15 U.S.C. §§12-27) or amending antitrust law to restrict certain purchases.

Examples of bills that take each of these approaches are described in **Table 1**. (Some bills take more than one approach.) Even bills with similar overall approaches differ in their details, including their definitions of the investors they target, the homes that they cover, and the extent to which any investors or homes that would otherwise be covered are excluded from the provisions.

Table 1. Selected Bills to Regulate Institutional Investors in the 119th Congress

Legislative Approach	Description and Examples
Prohibitions on certain purchases	Bills that would prohibit certain investors from purchasing single-family (SF) homes. Examples include the following: • 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act (§1001 of H.R. 6644/P.L. 119-101)^a • American Family Housing Act (H.R. 7186) • Homes for American Families Act (S. 3937)^a
Tax disincentives	Bills that would impose new taxes or prevent claiming certain existing tax provisions on certain investor-owned homes. Examples include the following: • HOPE (Humans Over Private Equity) for Homeownership Act (S. 788/H.R. 1745) • Stop Predatory Investing Act (S. 969) • American Neighborhoods Protection Act of 2025 (H.R. 3745) • Houses Over Middle-Class Exploitation Schemes Act (HOMES) Act (H.R. 4352) • Stop Wall Street Landlords Act of 2026 (H.R. 7138)^a • Affordable Housing and Homeownership Protection Act of 2026 (S. 3754) • American Homeownership Act (S. 3904)^a • HOPE (Humans Over Private Equity) for Homeownership Act (S. 3930)

Legislative Approach	Description and Examples
Limitations on federal financing or federal sales of foreclosed homes or distressed loans	Bills that would attempt to ensure that federal financing is not used for institutional investor purchases of SF homes or would codify certain restrictions on federal agencies' and government-sponsored enterprises' sales of foreclosed homes or distressed loans in ways that prioritize sales to owner-occupants or mission-driven investors. Examples include the following: • Section 103 of the American Housing and Economic Mobility Act of 2025 (H.R. 2038/S. 934) • Families First Housing Act of 2026 (H.R. 6962) • Stop Wall Street Landlords Act of 2026 (H.R. 7138)^a • Preserving Homes and Communities Act of 2026 (S. 3753) • American Homeownership Act (S. 3904)^a
Reporting, monitoring, investigations	Bills that would require additional federal monitoring of SF home purchases. Examples include the following: • HOME Act of 2025 (S. 2668/H.R. 3214) • Section 1001 of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act (H.R. 6644/P.L. 119-101)^a
Antitrust	Bills that would take an antitrust approach by modifying premerger notification requirements under the Clayton Act or amending the Clayton Act to restrict certain purchases. Examples include the following: • Housing Acquisitions Review and Transparency (HART) Act (S. 1796) • American Homeownership Act (S. 3904)^a • Homes for American Families Act (S. 3937)^a

Source: Congress.gov.

Notes: As of the date of this report, no bills shown in the table have been brought to the floor for a vote except for H.R. 6644, which was passed by the House and Senate and became law in July 2026 (P.L. 119-101).

a. This bill/law takes more than one approach and is included in multiple rows in the table.

How Does the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act Address Institutional Investors?

In June 2026, the House and Senate passed a wide-ranging housing bill, the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act (H.R. 6644), with provisions pertaining to institutional investors (§1001).⁴³ The bill was presented to the President on June 29, 2026, and became law on July 11, 2026 (P.L. 119-101).

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act prohibits large institutional investors (defined as for-profit companies that own at least 350 homes) from purchasing additional SF homes (defined as homes with one or two units). Certain types of purchases are exempt, namely,

- properties built, renovated, or converted for sale;

⁴³ For more information on versions of H.R. 6644 passed by the House and Senate and ultimately enacted, see CRS Report R48922, *Comparison of Selected Versions of H.R. 6644*, coordinated by Henry G. Watson.

- properties built or substantially rehabilitated (per the act’s definition) for the purpose of being rented out;
- properties that are part of programs intended to facilitate homeownership in certain specified ways (e.g., reporting positive rent payments to credit bureaus);
- properties acquired in connection with the satisfaction of a debt or through a foreclosure, deed in lieu of foreclosure, or similar mechanism;
- properties newly constructed, renovated, or converted for rental as part of a community for households with a member aged 55 or older; and
- properties (1) purchased from another institutional investor that owned the home prior to the enactment date or acquired it through an excepted purchase or (2) purchased from an investor that is not covered by the section within two years of the effective date.

The new law allows the Department of the Treasury to issue regulations to implement the requirements, subject to certain limitations, and allows for civil penalties of the greater of \$1 million or three times the home’s purchase price for violations of the prohibition on acquiring additional SF homes. The prohibition and enforcement provisions are to become effective 180 days after enactment and are to be repealed 15 years after the effective date. The act also requires certain GAO and HUD reports. Any reports or recommendations are to consider the sense of Congress that Section 1001 is “intended to expand the number of single-family homes available to individuals for purchase and is aimed at preserving and expanding the supply of single-family homes available to individuals.”⁴⁴

The new law also includes a requirement directing the HUD Secretary to establish a “renter outreach resource” to allow tenants in properties owned by large institutional investors to notify federal agencies of disputes with their landlords.⁴⁵ HUD is directed to take certain steps to respond to, track, and report on such disputes. Large institutional investors are directed to report annually on the number of SF homes they own and the city and state where they are located.

An earlier version of the bill, which the Senate passed in March 2026, would have required that homes acquired through several of the categories of excepted purchases, including BTR properties, be sold to individual homebuyers within seven years. A subsequent version passed by the House in May 2026 did not include such a provision, and it was not included in the enacted version. Several industry stakeholders argued that requiring large investors to sell BTR homes within seven years could reduce construction of new SF rentals, potentially limiting rental housing supply.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ P.L. 119-101 §1001(e)(3)(A).

⁴⁵ This provision was not included in a Senate-amended version of the bill passed in March 2026 but was added in a May 2026 House-amended version and included in the version of the bill that became law in July 2026.

⁴⁶ Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition et al., “Unified Industry Position on Build to Rent in the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act,” <https://www.mba.org/docs/default-source/advertising/unified-industry-position-on-btr-amendment.pdf>, and Ben Metcalf and David Garcia, “Turner Center Comments on Build to Rent Provisions of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act,” Turner Center for Housing Innovation at University of California Berkeley, March 7, 2026, <https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/blog/turner-center-comments-on-build-to-rent-provisions-of-the-21st-century-road-to-housing-act/>.

Author Information

Darryl E. Getter
Specialist in Financial Economics

Eva Su
Specialist in Financial Economics

Katie Jones
Specialist in Housing Policy

Acknowledgments

Mark P. Keightley, Maggie McCarty, and Jay B. Sykes made substantive contributions to this report.

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.