



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 26, 2025

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Roys, Brown Circulate Legislation to Prevent Price Collusion by Landlords

MADISON — As Wisconsinites face rising costs and threatened cuts to healthcare and education resulting from the chaos created by the Trump presidency, State Senator Kelda Roys (D-Madison) and Rep. Brienne Brown (D-Whitewater) circulated legislation Wednesday for co-sponsorship that would prohibit tech-enabled price fixing schemes.

Old-fashioned monopolies suggest smoke-filled rooms and twirling moustaches, but today, [landlords can buy price collusion software-as-a-service](#). These high-tech offerings use private data from property owners to build powerful algorithms that then suggest optimal pricing strategies for maximal profits. Some happy landlord customers have even found that they can make more money by keeping a relatively high number of units vacant and charging through the roof for the others. The more landlords in a given marketplace join this conspiracy by buying this “service,” the better the data gets, and the more profitable the price-fixing scheme becomes.

State Senator Kelda Roys issued the following statement:

“No matter where you are in Wisconsin, affordable housing is becoming harder to find. Housing costs are rising fast enough without letting landlords use computer-aided illegal price-fixing schemes. [Skyrocketing housing costs](#) are hurting our economy – making it hard for employers to attract and retain workers, reducing people’s spending power and financial security, and increasing homelessness. This legislation will help stop big tech companies from ripping off Wisconsin renters.”

Rep. Brienne Brown issued the following statement:

“It is no secret Wisconsin is suffering from a crisis in housing availability and affordability. Rents have skyrocketed since the pandemic and the problem is not getting any better. This bill is an important first step in stopping predatory landlords from colluding with each other to further inflate rent and prevent working Wisconsinites from thriving.”