

Chris O'Brien

From: Elmarie Ford <gabby03909@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 3:34 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: Re: Opposition to the Bill H8183, proposing a 5 percent tax increase on short term rentals.

On Wed, May 22, 2024 at 3:33 PM Elmarie Ford <gabby03909@gmail.com> wrote:

To Whom It May Concern. I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Elmarie Ford, I live at 21 Gilcrest Dr, West Warwick. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed 5 percent tax increase on short term rentals in Rhode Island. I believe that implementing such a tax increase at this time, before the completion of the agreed-upon studies from the last meeting, would be premature and detrimental to the short term rental industry in our state.

First and foremost, I would like to emphasize the importance of evidence-based decision-making. As per our previous discussions, it was agreed that comprehensive studies would be conducted to evaluate the impact of short term rentals on our local economy, housing market, and tourism industry. These studies were meant to provide the necessary data and insights to inform any potential policy changes.

However, it is concerning that a tax increase is being proposed before these studies have been completed and their findings have been thoroughly evaluated. By implementing a tax increase without a proper understanding of the implications, we risk negatively affecting the short term rental market in Rhode Island.

Short term rentals have become an essential part of our state's tourism industry, providing visitors with unique accommodation options and contributing significantly to the local economy especially during this time of inflation. Please be reminded that most of us are not having fun sharing our homes with others, never forget that most of us only have this one home, so it's a coping mechanism in earning a few extra dollars to pay our mortgage and not join the number of homeless. It's a desire which we have the right to, to leave an inheritance for our children.

I know most of you trying to dictate what we do with our homes, do not know what it feels like to receive a foreclosure notice, or to be up at nights worried because you don't earn enough after working. 6-7 days per week, most days 16 hours but don't have enough to pay all the bills plus feed your family on pay day.

Excessive taxation could deter potential renters and have a detrimental impact on the revenue generated by short term rentals. This, in turn, could have broader consequences for local businesses, restaurants, and attractions that depend on tourism. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the potential consequences for homeowners who rely on short term rentals as a source of income.

Many homeowners in Rhode Island have invested in properties with the intention of renting them out on a short term basis, but if you allow the time to complete the study you will find that most short term renters only have that one property. Increasing taxes without a proper understanding of the market dynamics could jeopardize the financial stability of these homeowners and discourage future investments in the short term rental sector. Instead of rushing into a tax increase, I urge you to prioritize the completion of the agreed-upon studies.

These studies will provide valuable insights into the impact of short term rentals on our economy and housing market and will enable informed decision-making. I believe that it is essential to base any policy changes on factual evidence and a comprehensive understanding of the situation at hand.

In conclusion, I respectfully request that you reconsider the proposed 5 percent tax increase on short term rentals in Rhode Island. I urge you to wait for the completion and evaluation of the studies as agreed upon from our last meeting. It is crucial to ensure that any decisions made regarding short term rentals are well-informed, fair, and considerate of the impact on homeowners, businesses, and our state's tourism industry.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust that you will carefully consider the concerns raised in this letter and act in the best interest of all stakeholders involved. I look forward to a thoughtful and evidence-based approach to addressing the issue of short term rentals in Rhode Island.

Yours Sincerely,
Elmarie Ford.