

25 March 2024

To the Honorable Members of the Rhode Island House Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Thu Luu and I am writing to you **in support of H 7960**, the Residential Landlord and Tenant Act, which prohibits arbitrary eviction and prevents displacement, discrimination, and retaliation. Month-to-month leases bring uncertainty to the lives of countless tenants, and implementing just cause eviction protections would effectively halt this destabilizing practice.

Additionally, rent increases higher than the rate of wage growth first force tenants to become rent-burdened, possibly putting off other essential expenses. Then, such rent increases function to evict otherwise contract-abiding tenants. Year-to-year rent increases would be capped at 4% absent a demonstrably greater rise in landlord costs. The prohibition on arbitrary eviction deters its use as a retaliatory tactic to undermine tenants' unions and other exercises of tenants' rights.

It is imperative to recognize that arbitrary evictions not only disrupt the lives of tenants but also exacerbate housing instability, contributing to a cycle of poverty and homelessness. It is disheartening that in the past 7 months, about 911 evictions have been filed for reasons unrelated to non-payment of rent.

I call on the Rhode Island House Committee on Judiciary to stand with renters and support this bill, a step in the right direction towards an equitable housing market in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Thu Luu