

Roberta DiMezza

From: Gregory Rice <user@votervoice.net>
Sent: Sunday, March 16, 2025 8:25 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: OPPOSE H5103 MAKING CRIMINALS PROTECTED CLASS

Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

As a former educator in the prison system, i learned that inmates carry a lifetime bumper sticker on their life even after their incarceration. Though challenging to them, it is important for the rest of society to have access to this information, especially when it comes to selecting them for occupancy in a rental dwelling.

Rhode Island House Bill 5103, which prevents landlords from considering an applicant's incarceration history, poses significant risks for both property owners and tenants. By restricting landlords' ability to screen applicants, the bill increases financial and safety concerns. Without knowing a tenant's criminal background, landlords may unknowingly rent to individuals with a history of violent offenses, property damage, or financial fraud, putting other tenants at risk and leading to higher eviction rates. Additionally, landlords could face increased insurance premiums or even liability issues if a tenant with a history of violence harms someone on the property. Landlords could end up placing sex offenders or violent criminals in homes with young families.

For tenants, this bill could create unintended safety concerns and housing instability. If landlords are unable to screen for serious past offenses, rental communities may see higher crime rates or an increase in disruptive tenants, leading long-term renters to move out. As responsible tenants seek safer housing options, landlords may respond by converting units to condominiums or short-term rentals, reducing the supply of affordable housing and ultimately driving up rental prices.

While the bill aims to protect individuals with past incarceration from discrimination, it undermines landlords' ability to maintain safe, stable, and financially viable rental properties. A more balanced approach would ensure fair access to housing while still allowing landlords to make informed decisions that protect tenants and the broader community.

Sincerely,

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