

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Tyler Bernadyn <user@votervoice.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:44 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** OPPOSE H5103 MAKING CRIMINALS PROTECTED CLASS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

This is simply an absurd bill, and whomever presented this should be ashamed. Criminal history is a protected class. No longer can do criminal background checks on tenants. Want that as a neighbor? That includes sex offenders. The criminals voluntarily participated in whatever illegal activity they were convicted of doing. A landlord should be able to voluntarily screen anyone who will be living in their own property.

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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