



STATE of RHODE ISLAND
Executive Department
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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Legislative Impact Statement

To: Robert E. Craven, Chair House Judiciary Committee
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary
Re: House 5181 AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY -- RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. The Commission would be pleased to present testimony to the committee. Please contact me (462-01110) if testimony is desired or for additional information.

The Commission finds this bill harmful.

This bill would allow service of notice of eviction for reasons other than nonpayment to be done by posting a summons or complaint "conspicuously on the door of the defendant's/tenant's dwelling. The Commission finds this type of service would have a disparate impact on people with disabilities. For example, a person with a visual impairment may not see the notice and be aware that they have been served. A person with an intellectual disability may not understand the significance of the notice, and may need assistance to read and understand the notice. This puts people with these types of disabilities at a higher risk for missing the opportunity to respond to or cure the notice and facing eviction.

An eviction has more serious implications these days, and could lead to a person becoming unhoused. The state has only a 2.7% vacancy rate for rentals compared to a healthy vacancy rate of 6-7%. (Source: RI Housing <https://www.rihousing.com/wp-content/uploads/Rent-Survey-Memo-2023-01-31-24.pdf>) An individual who has an eviction on their record has a much harder time finding another apartment which is already difficult with the extremely low vacancy rate.