

Roberta DiMezza

From: Anthony Thompson <user@votervoice.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:46 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Support H5504 - Emotional Support Animals

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Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

I am a housing provider and have been active in real estate in Rhode Island as a housing provider, real estate agent, and property renovator since the early 2000s. I am also a registered voter and generally align with the position of the RI Coalition of Housing Providers on housing issues.

I support House Bill 5504 because I believe it brings needed balance to accommodating tenants' needs for emotional support animals (ESAs) while also respecting the needs of housing providers in managing their properties.

H5504 ensures that only individuals with verified disabilities qualify for ESAs, permitting housing providers to request valid documentation from a licensed Rhode Island healthcare professional to confirm a tenant's need for an ESA, while still protecting tenants by not allowing housing providers to refuse housing solely due to the presence of an ESA.

This bill establishes a clear legal process for the acceptance of ESAs, which is sorely needed.

It aligns state service animal laws with federal regulations, designates dogs and cats as recognized emotional support animals, and outlines the types of documentation housing providers can request. Additionally, it requires applicants to have an established relationship with a Rhode Island medical professional for at least 30 days before providing documentation verifying their need for an ESA, which is already law in several other states.

H5504 is good legislation that finds the right balance between the rights of tenants who require emotional support animals and the concerns of housing providers.

For these reasons, I strongly support this proposed bill and hope you will too.

thank you for your consideration and your service to our State, Anthony Thompson

Sincerely,

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