



# THE RHODE ISLAND COALITION OF HOUSING PROVIDERS

SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION  
LANDLORD-TENANT LAW





# WHO WE ARE?

## HOUSING PROVIDERS

The Rhode Island Coalition of Housing Providers (RICOHP) is a diverse, statewide organization of landlords dedicated to supplying much-needed rental housing across the state.

RICOHP advocates for the protection of private rental property rights and the advancement of balanced legislation that strengthens the housing market and promotes effective, sustainable solutions. The coalition supports policies that safeguard the interests of both landlords and tenants





## FROM 2021

The pandemic was a turbulent period for both our nation and state, causing significant upheaval in the economy. Few sectors felt this impact more than the housing market. During this time, there was a dramatic shift not only in housing needs but also in housing preferences.

Unfortunately, the frustrations stemming from decades of inadequate local housing planning intensified, fueling legislative efforts to both expand housing production and impose additional regulations on existing homes and rental properties.



## TO 2025

Since 2021, **13** pro-tenant laws have passed, dramatically changing the landlord tenant regulations. This does not include the COVID-era eviction moratorium or rent relief program.



## PRO-TENANT LEGISLATION ENACTED



2021

**H5573 - Requires a landlord to obtain and have in full force and effect a general liability policy of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for those persons injured on the premises due to the negligence of the landlord.**

**H5257 - Prohibits discrimination in housing against those persons who have a lawful source of income.**



## 2022

**H8078 - Allows the district court to designate the date of the hearing in eviction matters filed under the residential landlord and tenant act. Delays eviction court dates**



**Also during this time, the Eviction Moratorium was in effect from May 2020 to August 2021. Putting substantial prohibitions on Landlords from recovering from non-paying tenants.**

**RentRelief RI was in effect from April 1, 2020, through September 30, 2022.**



## 2023

**H6323 - Provides for the sealing of Tenant Eviction Records. Tenants can seal evictions once every 5 years.**

**H6089 - Prohibits Rental Application Fees. Requires Landlords take most credit and background information directly from Tenants.**

**H5108- Increases the amount of costs for repairs that a tenant may deduct from his or her rent to (\$500)**

**H5204- Requires the publication and annual update to the "Landlord Tenant Handbook."**

**Rental Registry for ALL Rental Properties, prohibits evictions for non-payment when a unit is not lead compliant or not registered on new rental registry.**

**H6238 - Allows Tenants to pay their rent into the Court registry anytime a unit is not lead compliant.**

**H6201- Allows for a property owner who fails to comply with lead hazard mitigation provisions to be subject to damages and reasonable attorneys' fees.**







**2024**

## **LANDLORDS & TENANTS WORKING TOGETHER**

**H7162 PERMITS OTHER RESIDENTS OF A RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNIT TO EXTEND THE TERM OF THE RENTAL AGREEMENT FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DEATH OF THE LESSEE.**

**H7647 REQUIRES LANDLORDS TO PROVIDE A TENANT WITH A WRITTEN DISCLOSE ALL FEES THAT MAY APPLY IN THEIR RENTAL AGREEMENT.**

**H7304 INCREASES THE NOTICE REQUIREMENTS FOR RENTAL INCREASES FROM 30 DAYS TO 90 DAYS AND FOR PERSONS OLDER THAN AGE 62 TO 120 DAYS.**



# PRO-LANDLORD LEGISLATION







# IN 2024 LANDLORDS WERE UNDER FIRE WITH OVER 35+ PIECES OF LEGISLATION WE ARE ALREADY SEEING THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER BARRAGE AGAIN IN 2025....

The legislation proposed by tenant advocacy groups is oftentimes a well-meaning proposal that lacks balance and clarity as to how to address the root cause of the problem.

Rhode Island is experiencing a housing shortage alongside high inflation, impacting both homeowners and renters alike. While regulations aim to address tenant concerns, overly burdensome policies—often with unintended consequences—continue to worsen the problem. These measures either reduce the supply of available rentals or force the landlords who remain in the market to pass the added costs onto renters.

**WHAT WE WANT**



## WHAT DO LANDLORDS & TENANTS WANT?

Landlords are committed to fostering better, mutually respectful relationships with their tenants—something we believe is a shared priority. Landlords are looking for solutions to the challenges faced by both parties, and it is evident that only balanced approaches will lead us to a resolution.

The numerous legislative proposals we've seen in recent years have largely addressed the symptoms of a broader issue. At its core, the problem is a long-standing shortage of housing supply—decades in the making—resulting from local housing policies enacted by cities and towns, along with certain specific social concerns.

Landlords have committed to providing the essential housing stock that nearly half of Rhode Islanders rely on. We can do more, and the public sector can assist by encouraging housing production as well as maintaining the existing supply through the reduction of burdensome regulations. Landlords acknowledge the need for specific social services for our lowest-income residents. Therefore, we advocate for ongoing investment in programs like Section 8, which exemplifies how public and private sector collaboration can effectively address the needs of our community.



## LEAD LAW REFORM

The new lead law aims to enhance health and safety of at-risk residents of Rhode Island, a goal that landlords wholeheartedly support, as no one wishes to see children in harm's way. However, the law's current implementation creates challenges for both landlords and children, as it establishes unrealistic standards without a clear path to compliance.

Fortunately, the Rhode Island Coalition of Housing Providers has identified several practical and constructive adjustments to improve the situation.

### PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS

- Focus lead safety efforts on housing with at-risk occupants (children under 6 and pregnant women)
- Consolidates enforcement to one government entity
- Ensures funds in escrow may be invested in essential lead safety goals
- Clarifies responsible parties for effective communication
- Ensures accessible *transparency*, only to appropriate parties (government agencies and parties of the lease), while protecting landlord privacy (Domestic abuse victims, etc)
- Provides a more *practical* time period for new homeowners to address lead hazards
- Removes counterproductive penalties and prioritizes *incentives* for compliance
- Provides a system to ensure timely delivery of visual affidavits
- Clarify Registry application



LET'S TALK ABOUT  
BALANCE



## ESA CLARIFICATION

Landlords recognize the importance of service animals and emotional support animals, however, the current law falls short of providing clarity and protection for both parties, especially those tenants who truly need an ESA.

The coalition proposes that a law providing landlords the capability to verify the status of an ESA animal while enforcing the provision of a reasonable accommodation would prove extremely helpful in easing landlord-tenant relations.

\*CA, MT, AR, IA, LA



## SQUATTER PROTECTIONS

Unwary landlords are at risk of having their property stolen by intruders. A squatter is someone who unlawfully occupies a property, claiming it as their own and residing there as if it were their home. According to current laws, landlords are required to regard these intruders as tenants. Implementing squatter protections would allow for the timely removal of these trespassers who have entered a property without the owner's knowledge or consent. This would be advantageous for both the landlord and the other tenants in the building or neighborhood.

\*MI, MS, NH, NJ, NY, NC, OH, OK, PA, SC



## FIRST, LAST, & SECURITY

The option to collect first, last, and security deposit at move-in benefits both landlords and tenants. This allows tenants to prepay their last month's rent, which can help less qualified applicants demonstrate financial responsibility and improve their chances of securing an apartment. With inflation, security deposits often fail to cover repair costs after damages. Additionally, landlords risk losing funds when tenants use their security deposit for last month's rent.

\*AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NV, NJ, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WI, WV, WY





## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Create Equality in the Posting of a summons for reasons other than non-payment with that of non-payment cases.
- The creation of a bond for the appeals process, preventing abuse and delays in the court system.
- Landlord protections for abusive non-paying tenants.
- The current housing market (rental & sale) is a result of decades-long zoning policies and building regulations that has inhibited housing production to meet demand.
- Increased competition in our market place reduces or stabilizes pricing while increasing quality, thus resolving the core issues and symptoms of those issues which tenants face.





[www.ricohp.org](http://www.ricohp.org)  
[info@ricohp.org](mailto:info@ricohp.org)

**THANK YOU**

