

Roberta DiMezza

From: Scott Bonelli <scott@bigheadstudio.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 16, 2025 8:59 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Support H5505 - Emotional Support Animals

Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

Your support for H5504 is desperately needed. At the moment it is a system that is easy to abuse, I have had threats of a discrimination lawsuit from a tenant with a need for 5 support animals, leading to "free range" bunnies ruining the carpet and 3/4 of the subfloor. I couldn't afford a lawyer to fight her, so she won, and I lost thousands, this proposal is more than fair to those who need assistance animals I urge you to support it

Please support H5504, which ensures that only individuals with verified disabilities qualify for emotional support animals (ESAs). Landlords are permitted to request valid documentation from licensed Rhode Island healthcare professionals to confirm the tenant's need for an ESA, but they cannot refuse housing solely due to the presence of an ESA. The goal of this legislation is to strike a balance between the rights of tenants who require emotional support animals and the concerns of housing providers.

This bill establishes a clear legal process for the acceptance of ESAs. It aligns state service animal laws with federal regulations, designates dogs and cats as recognized emotional support animals, and outlines the types of documentation landlords 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. This language is already part of law in several other states.

Sincerely,

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