



March 18, 2025

Representative Robert E. Craven, Chair

House Judiciary Committee

Rhode Island Statehouse

Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: Testimony In Support of House Bill 5674- An Act Relating to Property - Residential Landlord and Tenant Act

On behalf of United Way Rhode Island, we express our support for House Bill 5674, which is essential for ensuring that every Rhode Islander has access to safe and affordable housing. Through the LIFT UNITED Initiative of our LIVE UNITED 2025 Strategic Plan, we are committed to dismantling the barriers that impede equitable access to secure, quality homes. We believe that stable housing is a fundamental human right and the cornerstone of economic security, healthy communities, and long-term prosperity for historically marginalized populations.

House Bill 5674 represents an opportunity to transform the rental housing landscape by expanding access to safe and affordable homes, strengthening support services, and providing essential resources that empower individuals and families to achieve long-term stability. By ensuring legal protection against housing discrimination the House Committee on Judiciary addresses a population at the highest risk of homelessness.

Without legal protection against housing discrimination, tenants are vulnerable to unscrupulous landlords operating residential units without formal lease agreements. This off-the-books situation is dangerous, because there's no recourse for tenants for poor conditions, exploitive fees, or abusive landlord behavior. Residential landlord and tenant policy is not hypothetical, abstract law- these are rules that affect who can find a home in Rhode Island. United Way of Rhode Island is committed to securing safe and affordable housing for everyone who makes Rhode Island their home. We believe in targeting the root causes of inequality to lift communities out of poverty, and we know housing is the first step in moving individuals and families from crisis to stability.

Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders

Housing is the foundation upon which families build their futures. By supporting House Bill 5674, Rhode Island can make significant strides toward creating a state where every individual has the opportunity to live in a safe, affordable home. This investment in housing stability will reduce long-term reliance on emergency assistance, strengthen our local economy, and promote a more just and equitable society. We urge you to support this measure and join us in our commitment to creating a Rhode Island where secure housing is within reach for all.

Sincerely,

Peggy Desjarlais,

Housing and Economic Development Policy

United Way Rhode Island