

Roberta DiMezza

From: Diane McWeeney <user@votervoice.net>
Sent: Sunday, March 16, 2025 3:04 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: SUPPORT H5917, H5918, & H5906 Lead Law Reform

Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

I called a lead inspection company in August of 2024 to have a 725 square foot apartment. I had mother and who were homeless and living with relatives as prospective tenants. I spent over \$15,000 on a new cement foundation (since I had a small amount of peeling paint on the foundation). Also, I had to totally sparkle and paint the front hallway (this the main access to move furniture in or out of the building). The lead inspector was as quite impressed with the apartment and thought it would pass quickly, but 4 visits later at a cost of \$575 the apartment passed. My tenant's finally moved in January 2025. Most of my costs were for items not in the apartment but on items on the outside (foundation, 5 railings and my front hallway). My tenants were calling me every week hoping to get into the apartment sooner. I was fortunate to be able to budget for the improvements and have my tenants wait for the lead certificate.

I am writing to you to express my concern for the current rental registry and lead law. I fully support changes being made so that this law does as it is intended and reduces the burden and cost on the housing market. I fully support the proposed changes of The Rhode Island Coalition of Housing Providers.

It is essential to guarantee that the state cannot use AI technology to generate information for any public-facing registry, now or in the future. The use of AI during the registry rollout was deeply concerning, as it produced numerous errors, including incorrect property details, inaccurate status designations (rental vs. owner-occupied), misclassification of in-state and out-of-state landlords, and incorrect categorizations of landlords by size. While AI can be a useful tool, it is far from 100% reliable. Furthermore, the information that was published was neither required nor authorized by law. The law explicitly states that the registry should only contain information provided directly by landlords. This misuse of AI should never have been allowed.

As a landlord, I fully support lead-safe housing for at-risk occupants. However, data indicates that approximately 15% or fewer rental households include children under six—the group most vulnerable to lead exposure, as defined by multiple state lead laws. Efforts should be targeted toward this specific segment rather than implementing a broad, all-encompassing approach that is unrealistic and unattainable. Overloading an already strained system with additional requirements will not effectively protect children.

Although the state has doubled its inventory of lead inspectors, the majority are from out of state—some traveling as far as two hours. Understandably, inspection costs have also doubled in many cases. Despite these changes, the system remains overwhelmed, with landlords experiencing months-long wait times for inspections. There is still no efficient system in place to facilitate timely lead inspections, further complicating compliance efforts.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these much-needed changes outlined in the proposals mentioned above.

Sincerely,

Diane McWeeney
21 Rhode Island St
Cranston, RI 02920
dialadoo@cox.net