

Statement by Stephen Perrino on H.5917 to the Rhode Island State Legislature Committee.

Good [morning/afternoon], members of the Legislature. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

We are here to propose several key amendments to the mandatory rental registry law to ensure clarity, fairness, and practicality in its implementation.

First, we recommend **limiting the mandatory rental registry to properties constructed prior to 1978**. The Consumer Product Safety Commission banned lead-based paint in 1978, and federal and state laws already exempt post-1978 buildings from lead disclosure requirements to prevent confusion. For consistency, we propose removing post-1978 buildings from the registry.

Second, we propose **removing the restriction that prevents a landlord from evicting a tenant for nonpayment of rent if the property has not been registered and inspected**. This provision creates significant financial and operational challenges:

- If rent goes unpaid, landlords may struggle to maintain the property, cover mortgages, and address necessary repairs, potentially leading to foreclosure.
- The current shortage of lead inspectors means landlords may be waiting months for an appointment, during which tenants could withhold rent without fear of eviction—even if the property is safe.
- This creates an unfair burden on landlords and could negatively impact housing stability.

Third, we recommend **changes to the public information requirements for safety reasons**.

Given increasing concerns about harassment and personal security, we propose that certain personal details be collected but not displayed on the public registry, including:

- The landlord's home address, business address, PO Box, email address, and personal phone number.

However, the following information would remain publicly accessible:

- The name of the landlord or business entity.
- The property manager's or agent's contact details, including business address, email, and phone number.
- Information necessary to identify each dwelling unit.

Additionally, we propose **pushing the effective date of the registry requirement to September 1, 2025**, allowing landlords adequate time to adjust. We also recommend delaying penalty

assessments until **October 1, 2025**, providing a 30-day grace period for compliance once the registry is operational.

These changes align the law with existing federal and state policies, protect both landlords and tenants, and ensure a fair and practical approach to rental property oversight.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions.

Stephen Perrino, REALTOR®, Paiva Realty Group, East, Providence, RI
Chair, REALTOR® Party Committee, Greater Providence Board of REALTORS®