



March 18, 2025  
The Honorable Rep. Craven  
Committee on House Judiciary  
82 Smith Street,  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: H.5917 --- RELATNG TO PROPERTY—RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD TENANT ACT**

Dear Chairman and Committee Members:

The Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® strongly supports H.5917 and urges this committee to pass it to the floor.

Our Association cares about the community and the safety of consumers and supports the concept of lead-safe properties. However, in the current legislation requiring all landlords to register with the Rhode Island Department of Health's Rental Registry, the prohibition of evictions for non-payment of rent, and the requirement to provide unnecessary private information for public viewing, has the potential to cause serious consequences. To make matters worse, the inadequate number of lead inspectors in the state at the time of the implementation of this law, and the lack of public outreach by the Department of Health, has created significant problems for landlords and tenants alike.

First, our Association questions the rationale of requiring registration of rental properties built after 1978. If lead paint safety is the focus of the registry, including those properties is unnecessary due to the fact that the federal government banned the use of lead in painting products from 1978 forward.

Within the registration itself, we are extremely concerned about the personal data that would be required of landlords to include for public view. For instance, requiring the property owner's address could subject them to threats, harassment, or violence at home. This bill would eliminate the property owner's address for public facing information, and instead, only require the name and contact information of the property owner, along with the property manager and their contact. Also, according to the current law, those property owners who are not in compliance with the Rental Registry mandates are prohibited from evicting tenants for nonpayment of rent, which could negatively both them and their tenants.



Due to the state of the economy's uncertainty, this penalty could hurt family-owned property owners who may be using these assets as investment properties to generate another income to provide for their families. Given the lengthy time it is taking for landlords to attain a lead-safe certificate due to the short supply of inspectors and lack of widespread information about the law itself, many of these owners could be placed in financial jeopardy if not receiving the rental income they depend upon.

Lastly, though we thank the Department of Health for delaying the enforcement of penalties for the past few months and working with our members and association, we are concerned that the vast number of properties still out of compliance with the Registry mandates will remain that way for quite some time. Within this bill there is a new effective date which delays the time to register their properties and the deadline to comply with the new law. While this law was passed nearly three years ago, funding to create an online database and registry was not available until July 1<sup>st</sup> of 2024, which only gave the Department of Health two months to create an online database and registration. The deadline for property owners to register and comply was only a month later on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Just weeks into the registration opening to the public, the registry crashed multiple times, leading to mass panic upon the landlords who could not then comply by the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Allowing more time, which could not only ensure that the database can handle ample and high volume of users, but also provide property owners with more time to schedule inspections, is highly recommended, given the concerns noted above.



We ask that the General Assembly, especially those with rental properties, take the following points into consideration and join the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® in supporting H.5917.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor J. Chasse'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'T' and 'C'.

Trevor J. Chasse  
Advocacy Manager  
Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®

---