

TO: The Honorable Robert E. Craven
Chair, House Judiciary Committee

DATE: March 18th, 2025

RE: Opposition for bills 5917 and 5918

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the Committee,

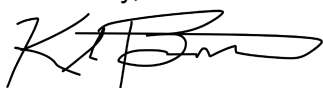
I am writing in strong opposition to bills 5917 and 5918. I am a resident of Cranston and the mother of two Rhode Islanders who had elevated blood lead levels in their first year of life. When my children were little I was a renter in Providence. While I was pregnant with my first child, I was looking for a larger apartment to prepare for the transition to becoming a family. Rhode Island doctors do an incredible job of educating women of child bearing age and pregnant people about the risks of lead in the housing stock in Rhode Island. As a young soon to be parent, in my apartment search, I asked landlords about lead in the apartments I looked at. As soon as I asked, the tone changed, and many landlords turned me away and said "this apartment is not for you", without answering my questions.

When I finally found a beautiful, affordable apartment, it was getting close to my due date. The apartment had been fully renovated inside, but had chipping exterior paint. Desperate to have a home, I signed the lease and the landlord made me sign a form waiving my lead rights. I wonder every single day if this is the reason my children had elevated blood lead levels and now have learning difficulties (ADHD and mild dyslexia). I wonder every day if it was a mistake to choose to stay in Rhode Island. I wonder why my elected leaders continue to allow Rhode Island families to deal with the consequences of lack of enforcement on their own.

The rental registry is a long overdue enforcement of existing lead laws that all landlords should already be following regardless of whether they rent to families or pregnant people. HB5917 and HB5918 whittle down the protections for some of Rhode Island's most vulnerable residents and undermine the progress that myself and countless others have fought for. By allowing landlords to continue to rent hazardous properties you are showing that you do not care about the health and welfare of Rhode Island's mothers and young children. Young families need options for housing, particularly safe rental housing.

I respectfully urge you to stop the practice of letting parents and the next generation of Rhode Island residents bear the burden of the lack of enforcement of lead laws and oppose these two bills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kristina Brown', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kristina Brown

