

Roberta DiMezza

From: Anthony Thompson <user@votervoice.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:46 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: SUPPORT 5919 -TRESPASS AND VANDALISM -- RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD TENANT ACT

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Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

I am a housing provider and have been active in real estate in Rhode Island as a housing provider, real estate agent, and property renovator since the early 2000s. I am also a registered voter and generally align with the position of the RI Coalition of Housing Providers on housing issues.

I support House Bill 5919 because it closes a loophole in the law which allows a criminal trespasser to have the protection and rights of tenants.

A squatter is someone who takes up possession of a property illegally and without the consent of the owner, and as such, can put the owner, the property, and neighboring tenants and property owners at risk. To be blunt, someone who breaks into a property and occupies it illegally is typically not the best neighbor.

While I don't have personal experience with this, I have heard a few stories over the years directly from other housing providers who had it happen to them, and honestly it sounded like a nightmare scenario. They had a vacant property they were either renovating or had just finished renovating and were preparing to rent out, when they found someone had moved into the property and changed the locks without their (the owner's) knowledge or consent. When they called the police, the police said, "they have a key, this is a civil matter, looks like you're going to have to evict them."

The notion that a property owner would have to evict someone who illegally entered and occupied a property, a process that takes many months, and can cost thousands of dollars, is almost incomprehensible, not to mention monthly carrying costs to the owner during the process and the often extensive repairs needed after the criminal is finally removed from the property.

Trespassers are not tenants, nor should they be elevated to the status of, nor enjoy the protections of, bona fide tenants.

For these reasons, I strongly support this proposed bill and hope you will as well.

thank you for your consideration and your service to our State, Anthony Thompson

Sincerely,

Anthony Thompson
43 Wildrose Ct
Warwick, RI 02888
art@sigilservices.com