

Roberta DiMezza

From: Scott Bonelli <scott@bigheadstudio.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 16, 2025 8:58 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: SUPPORT H5919 - Protection from squatters

Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

I have had first-hand experience with a squatter. He couldn't provide the police with a valid lease, yet they allowed him to stay telling me it was a civil matter and that I needed to evict him to protect his rights. Long story short, he appealed and otherwise worked the system, he stayed for over three months, ruined the apartment, trashed the yard, and threatened family members and other good tenants. It took 3 months to get a restraining order to protect my elderly mother as he couldn't be served because he "didn't live there" and I lost the "good" tenant in the second month of the battle. He played the law every way he could costing me thousands of dollars while displacing a new tenant that was lined up to move in. Rhode Island needs protection from squatters. This is no different than if someone were to steal a product from Walmart, this is a criminal offense, and we need the aid of the legal system. We need you on our side! I understand the need for housing in this state, but it is not my job to provide it to criminals.

A "squatter" is a person who moves into a property without the consent of the owner. This law would deter unsavory characters from being able to trespass into a property and not be able to be removed in a timely manner. When squatters enter properties they may put others in danger, displace lawful applicants who are scheduled to move into a property, and subject a property owner to a lengthy and costly eviction timeline. This law would treat trespassers as they are - criminals, rather than tenants who have rights and require a due process eviction proceeding. Thank you for considering this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

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