

**Roberta DiMezza**

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**From:** Elena Wilcox <ewilcox@gustavewhite.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 2:58 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** OPPOSE 5921

Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

Please oppose Rhode Island House Bill 5921, which proposes allowing tenants to withhold rent payments and deposit them into an escrow account upon the issuance of a second notice of violation by a housing code enforcement officer.

We oppose this bill for many reasons:

1. **\*\*Financial Strain\*\***: Withholding rent can disrupt landlords' cash flow, making it challenging to cover mortgage payments, property taxes, and maintenance costs. This financial instability could hinder their ability to address the very violations cited.
2. **\*\*Potential for Abuse\*\***: Tenants might exploit this provision by exaggerating minor issues to withhold rent, leading to unnecessary disputes and legal complications.
3. **\*\*Existing Remedies\*\***: Current laws already provide mechanisms for tenants to address unresolved code violations, such as reporting to housing authorities or seeking legal recourse. This bill may introduce redundant processes.
4. **\*\*Deterrent to Property Investment\*\***: The risk of rent withholding could discourage investment in rental properties, reducing the availability of affordable housing in the long term.

Sincerely,

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