



April 22, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chair, House Judiciary
Rhode Island State House, 82 Smith Street, Providence RI 02903

Re: In Support of House Bill 6160

Dear Chair Craven and Members of the Committee:

The mission of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) is to increase the supply of safe, healthy, and affordable homes in thriving communities. We currently have 18 nonprofit developer members who own and operate more than 7,000 rental homes for low- and moderate-income Rhode Islanders. We also serve as the backbone for Homes RI, a coalition of more than 80 organizations who support our mission to increase the supply of and access to affordable homes. I write to you today in support of H-6160, legislation which would permit survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking to terminate their residential lease early without financial penalty when they need to leave a home for their safety.

H6160 provides a potentially lifesaving option for individuals who experience abuse and need to leave their living situation expeditiously. The legislation creates a process for the tenants to leave safely, while ensuring that landlords receive notice and are not left without recourse, preserving fairness for both parties, while prioritizing the survivor safety.

Forty-one other states have enacted similar protections. Rhode Island has a history of ensuring protection for vulnerable populations, as well as prioritizing the housing needs of its residents. Advancing this legislation would be additive to the progress we have made and invested in as a state.

Safe, stable housing is one of the most important factors in recovery and long-term security for survivors. We encourage the Committee to move this legislation forward.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony on this matter. As always, I am happy to answer any questions and can be reached at 401-721-5680 ext. 104 or mlodge@housingnetworkri.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melina Lodge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melina Lodge, Executive Director