



To: Representative Robert E. Craven, Sr., Chair of the House Judiciary Committee
Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Michelle Loranger
Executive Director, Day One

Date: April 22, 2025

Re: **Support for House Bill 6160, Survivor Early Lease Termination**

Day One appreciates this opportunity to **support House Bill 6160, sponsored by Chairman Craven**. This survivor safety bill would provide crucial protections for victims and their children fleeing abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. It will allow eligible survivors to terminate their lease early for safety reasons, without incurring fees or penalties. It would make this process clear, with required tenant-victim documentation for eligibility provided to landlords. This bill would also enable survivors with the necessary documentation to be allowed a lock-change at their apartment, at the tenant's expense. We have heard from many victims in RI who need these options.

Without these protections, victims and survivors risk the financial and civil consequences that can come with leaving an abusive environment. This bill will make it easier to leave these situations, ultimately helping to keep Rhode Island individuals and communities safe.

Day One is the Statewide Sexual Assault Coalition, we see firsthand the challenges that come with leaving environments of abuse perpetrated by intimate partners. This bill will prevent prolonged abuses by empowering victims and survivors with the knowledge that leaving is an option free of civil consequences from their landlord.

A coalition of Rhode Island survivors, domestic and sexual violence victim service providers, and advocates came together to champion this bill, based on similar laws from our neighboring New England states, all of whom already have this safe housing law.

Key provisions of the Survivor Early Lease Termination Act include:

- A prohibition on evictions, fees, and other penalties for abuse survivors who terminate their lease to flee for their safety.
- A prohibition on landlords disclosing confidential information obtained from survivors.
- A variety of methods survivors can use to verify their status with written documentation, including self-certification as found in other RI domestic abuse safety laws.

41 states already have early lease termination laws for survivors, with New Hampshire joining this list in May 2024. 19 states have tenant lock-change laws for survivors.

This legislation, if enacted, will eliminate roadblocks and unnecessary challenges in place for survivors seeking healing. This legislation corrects the imbalance of power by allowing victims to seek freedom without the fear of financial and civil consequences due to early lease termination or changing door locks.

We thank you for your consideration and urge you to pass the bill this year.