



April 22, 2025

Dear Chair Craven and Members of the Committee,

My name is Vanessa Volz and I am the President and CEO of Sojourner House, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking in the state of Rhode Island.

I'm writing today in strong support of House Bill 6160 which would grant tenants who are victims of various forms of abuse the right to terminate a lease agreement early without penalty or liability for rent.

As victim advocates, we know that there are a number of reasons why breaking a lease might be the only way that a victim of abuse can ensure their safety. **And safety should not come with fines attached.**

A victim of domestic violence should not be punished for fleeing an abusive living situation.

A stalking victim should not be punished for moving after their stalker discovered their location and threatened their safety.

A victim of sexual assault should not be forced to continue living down the hall from the person who violated them; scared to walk to the parking lot or ride the elevator and at risk for further harm.

With the law the way it is, a victim of abuse could be forced to continue paying rent on an apartment they were forced to flee from months ago. This is unacceptable. Our state should be prioritizing the safety of its citizens— not adding price tags to it. This legislation would be a pathway to freedom for many. We hope you'll help to move it forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at [vvolz@sojournerri.org](mailto:vvolz@sojournerri.org).

Warmly,  
Vanessa Volz

President and CEO

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