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From: bounce@bounce.voterveoice.net on behalf of Sandra Negron
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Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:29 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: OPPOSE H7034 MAKING CRIMINALS PROTECTED CLASS

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

I am writing to strongly oppose House Bill 7034. While the goal of expanding housing access is understandable, this bill removes a landlord's ability to consider incarceration history when screening applicants. Each property owner should have the right to make decisions about who lives in their property, based on their own standards for safety, security, and community. Limiting this discretion could put existing tenants at risk and force landlords into situations where they cannot fully protect their buildings or residents.

Rhode Island House Bill 7034, which prevents landlords from considering an applicant's incarceration history, poses significant risks for both property owners and tenants.

This bill prohibits landlords from asking a prospective tenant for their previous address. Without that information a credit and background check cannot be completed.

By restricting landlords' ability to screen applicants, the bill increases financial and safety concerns. Without knowing a tenant's criminal background, landlords may unknowingly rent to individuals with a history of violent offenses, property damage, or financial fraud, putting other tenants at risk and leading to higher eviction rates. Additionally, landlords could face increased insurance premiums or even liability issues if a tenant with a history of violence harms someone on the property. Landlords could end up placing sex offenders or violent criminals in homes with young families.

For tenants, this bill could create unintended safety concerns and housing instability. If landlords are unable to screen for serious past offenses, rental communities may see higher crime rates or an increase in disruptive tenants, leading long-term renters to move out. As responsible tenants seek safer housing options, landlords may respond by converting units to condominiums or short-term rentals, reducing the supply of affordable housing and ultimately driving up rental prices.

While the bill aims to protect individuals with past incarceration from discrimination, it undermines landlords' ability to maintain safe, stable, and financially viable rental properties. A more balanced approach would ensure fair access to housing while still allowing landlords to make informed decisions that protect tenants and the broader community.

Sincerely,

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