

House Committee on Judiciary

18 March 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of/Opposition to House Bill 7758, titled An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Bed Bugs in Residential Premises Act

Dear Chairperson McEntee and members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Robert Livingston, and I am a student at Providence College studying history and political science. I am a legislative intern working with Representative Mary Ann Shallcross Smith from House District 46, who has introduced the said bill.

I support House Bill 7758, titled An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Bed Bugs in Residential Premises Act, because...

The bill would allow tenants to notify landlords of the presence of bedbugs in a timely manner. It would also allow the landlord to notify the tenant within two business days after inspection indicating whether the dwelling unit contains bed bugs. The bill also provides a timely notification when the inspection of bed bugs in a dwelling would occur, which would be forty-eight hours before starting. The bill also requires the inspector to advise the tenant to remove furniture or other personal property immediately after inspecting furniture that contains bed bugs. The bill also would prevent landlords from offering rent to property that they know contains bed bugs. This would be unfair to the tenant, as they would have property that would have pests in the dwelling.

The bill also provides reasonable expectations of owners and occupants. They must maintain clean and sanitary conditions, to prevent bed bugs and other pests from occupying the dwelling. Every occupant of a structure must also exterminate any insects, rodents, and other pests from the premises. All occupants of dwellings would need to keep all supplied plumbing fixtures and facilities in clean and sanitary conditions, as well.

According to Data.gov, the city of New York requires property owners to obtain bedbug history from tenants or a dwelling unit owner. Local Law 69 of 2017 requires all multiple dwelling property owners to obtain bed bug infestation history from the tenant or unit owner. This law strongly aligns with House Bill 7758's policy, as it also requires property owners to maintain sanitary conditions by eliminating bed bugs and other pests. Additionally, the bill also allows for tenants to notify bedbug presence in a timely manner.

An article from WPRI dated to April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, also states that tenants in the Wildberry Apartments in West Warwick dealt with bedbugs for months. An outbreak of eight units occurred over the summer, with the pests being exterminated, but the problem continued to occur on and off for several months. The article also states that two tenants have repeatedly refused inspection or treatment, which worsened the situation. This bill would ultimately prevent this situation. It would require tenants to inspect the situation and allow them to notify landlords of the presence of bedbugs in a dwelling.

Because of the said positions, I urge you to vote in favor of bill 7758.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak in favor of bill 7758. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Robert Livingston