



128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400
Providence, RI 02903
Phone: (401) 831-7171
Fax: (401) 831-7175
www.riaclu.org
info@riaclu.org

ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

TESTIMONY ON 26-H 7764, RELATING TO PROPERTY -- RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT March 18, 2026

The ACLU of Rhode Island writes to express its support for this legislation, which would be an important step in protecting the state's residents from unfair rental pricing tactics based on a questionable technological practice.

Specifically, it would prohibit the use of price-fixing rental algorithms. The software for doing this is sold by a company called RealPage and is often used by corporate landlords to drive up rents and decrease competition among landlords. As a recent antitrust case filed by the Department of Justice against RealPage noted, algorithmic pricing for rent makes it easier for landlords to coordinate rental increases with each other.¹ Through this algorithm, landlords can input information about their rentals to instruct the algorithm to generate rent recommendations based on that information and data from other participating landlords.

Providence recently passed an ordinance to address this issue, and it had good reason to do so. According to Redfin, Providence is the least affordable city in the country for renters.² While the capital city is particularly hard-hit by this type of practice, this bill would help address the problem statewide and recognize the dangers of completely unregulated algorithmic uses in key decision-making areas that affect basic human rights.

Rhode Island's housing shortage may be a large contributor to the unaffordability of rental housing, but the coordination of rental increases between landlords only exacerbates this crisis. Without the use of a price-fixing algorithm to determine and coordinate rents, landlords would otherwise more fairly vie for tenants by competing independently based on their own pricing, lease terms, or other discounts and concessions.

In order to rein in this type of disruptive technological innovation, we therefore support passage of this legislation. Thank you for considering our views.

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-department-sues-realpage-algorithmic-pricing-scheme-harms-millions-american-renters>

² <https://www.redfin.com/news/rent-affordability-2025/>