



March 18, 2026

Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H7766 - OPPOSE

Dear Chair McEntee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance (the “Alliance”), I write to oppose H7766, which would amend the Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to eliminate the existing five-year waiting period for sealing eviction records and remove the limitation on how frequently such requests may be made. This bill creates significant unintended consequences that will negatively impact housing providers, risk assessment, and ultimately housing availability in Rhode Island.

Eviction records are one of the few objective tools available to housing providers to assess rental risk. By allowing immediate and unlimited sealing of eviction records, H7766 effectively removes access to relevant and recent tenancy history.

This creates a system where property owners are unable to distinguish between isolated issues and repeated patterns of nonpayment or lease violations and screening becomes less reliable, particularly for smaller landlords without institutional risk tolerance.

As with many Rhode Island housing policies, the burden of this bill will fall most heavily on small, local property owners. Unlike large institutional operators, small landlords:

- Rely on consistent rent payments to meet mortgage and operating obligations;
- Lack the capacity to absorb repeated tenancy losses; and
- Depend on screening tools, like eviction history, to make informed decisions.

Removing access to this information increases exposure and will likely lead to more conservative leasing practices.

Current law strikes a balance by allowing eviction records to be sealed after a meaningful period and under defined circumstances. H7766 removes that balance entirely. This risks undermining the integrity of the judicial process and reduces accountability for repeat conduct.

We respectfully urge the Committee to reject this bill.

Sincerely,

Gregory Tumolo

Gregory Tumolo, Executive Director
Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance

CC: Members of the House Judiciary Committee