



March 18, 2026

The Honorable Rep. Carol McEntee
House Judiciary Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: H 8066: AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY – RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® (RIAR), we respectfully submit this testimony in support of H 8066 RIAR. represents more than 5,900 licensed real estate professionals who list, sell, lease, manage, and appraise residential and commercial real estate to make Rhode Island a better place to call home.

Imagine that you return from vacation or a winter in Florida to find a stranger living in your home or that your tenant moves a friend or romantic partner into your rental or rents it as a short-term rental without your knowledge or consent. Can the police remove the squatter or would you as the property owner be required to hire an attorney to evict him or her?

Unfortunately, existing Rhode Island law does not provide a clear answer. Scenarios like this can happen with foreclosure properties, second homes, vacant apartments, primary residences, and more. Squatting can cause damage; cause the owners to lose rent or delay selling a property; or force the owners to live elsewhere and pay attorney's fees to evict the squatter.

To address these issues, H 8066 would clearly distinguish who is a squatter from a tenant or authorized inhabitant. Squatters would be treated as trespassers, facing a misdemeanor felony charge, with penalties that include fines and imprisonment. The legislation would authorize the police to remove and arrest a squatter instead of forcing the property owner to spend time and money to pursue an eviction.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® respectfully supports H 8066 and urges passage. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Trevor J. Chasse
Director, Government Affairs
Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®