



**RHODE ISLAND COALITION
OF HOUSING PROVIDERS**

www.ricohp.org

March 16, 2026

To Honorable Representative Carol McEntee
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

VIA Email: HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

RE: Letter in SUPPORT of House Bill No. 8066

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Coalition of Housing Providers (RICOHP), we strongly support H8066, which rightfully classifies squatters as trespassers rather than forcing property owners to go through an unnecessarily lengthy and costly eviction process. This common-sense legislation aligns Rhode Island with many other states that have already implemented similar measures to protect property owners from unlawful occupation.

Current Rhode Island law fails to distinguish between lawful tenants and individuals who illegally occupy a property without the owner's consent. This loophole allows squatters to take advantage of property owners, forcing them into a drawn-out eviction process in housing court. Landlords are at risk of having their properties effectively stolen by intruders who unlawfully enter and claim residency. This is not only a financial burden but also a severe violation of property rights, and possibly a danger to lawful tenants.

H8066 would allow for the swift removal of squatters, recognizing them as trespassers rather than granting them tenant protections they are not entitled to. This change is critical in preventing unwarranted delays and financial strain on property owners who are simply trying to reclaim and maintain control over their own homes and rental units. Squatters effectively remove housing from the market for lawful, well-intentioned, renters and homebuyers.

Furthermore, addressing squatting as a criminal offense would help maintain the safety and security of neighborhoods, protecting landlords, homeowners, homebuyers, and lawful tenants from the risks associated with unauthorized occupants.

Similar laws exist across the country, recognizing that property owners should not be forced into prolonged legal battles to remove individuals who have no right to occupy their property. By enacting H8066, Rhode Island would join other states in ensuring that housing laws protect the rightful property owners and lawful tenants rather than rewarding bad actors who exploit legal loopholes.

We urge you to support H8066 to restore fairness and security to Rhode Island's housing market. Thank you for your time and consideration, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss this important issue further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shannon Elizabeth Weinstein', written in a cursive style.

Shannon Elizabeth Weinstein
On behalf of the RI Coalition of Housing Providers