



March 18, 2026

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

RE: H8108 - OPPOSE

Dear Chair McEntee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance (the “Alliance”), I write to oppose H8108, which limits rent increases to no more than 4% annually unless the landlord is granted an exemption by the Secretary of Housing and provides tenants with a civil action to recover damages, including an award of attorneys’ fees/punitive damages, for violations.

A substantial number of Rhode Island residents own rental property. By restricting their ability to adjust rents to respond to changing economic conditions (e.g., stubborn inflation, increases in state and local tax rates, double-digit increases in utility costs, etc.), H8108 will limit the financial viability of rental property ownership. If the goal of H8108 is to solve Rhode Island’s chronic housing crisis through rent control, the legislation will have the exact opposite effect. If landlords cannot make market adjustments to rents, they may decide to take their properties off of the rental market—thereby making the remaining supply of rental units less accessible and more expensive.

Moreover, it is common practice for property owners to take out loans to finance maintenance, repairs, and improvements. Rental adjustments are often necessary to cover the costs associated with these investments. By capping rent increases, H8108 will disincentivize rental property owners from making upgrades, as they may be unable to recover their costs or service their debt. The long-term result will be a deteriorating housing stock and fewer high-quality rental options for tenants. Landlords will perform only the bare minimum maintenance and repairs required by law and will forgo quality of life and beautification improvements that would benefit tenants and enhance the long-term value of the property.

Notably, only three states—California, Washington, and Oregon—have enacted statewide rent control laws. While some states, including New York, New Jersey, and Maryland, allow local governments to implement rent stabilization measures, widespread rent control remains the exception rather than the rule. If H8108 is signed into law, Rhode Island will join California, Washington, and Oregon as national outliers.

In sum, while H8108 is intended to protect tenants, its practical effect will be to discourage investment in Rhode Island’s real estate market. Landlords, particularly those operating in low- to middle-income communities, will be less inclined to improve their properties due to financial hardship, ultimately harming the very communities that the bill sponsors are seeking to help.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me to continue this important conversation.

Sincerely,

*Gregory Tumolo*

Gregory Tumolo, Executive Director  
Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance

CC: Members of the House Judiciary Committee