



March 18, 2026

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

Re: H.8108, An Act Relating to Property – Residential Landlord and Tenant Act

Dear Chairwoman McEntee,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition wish to register our opposition to H.8108, An Act Relating to Property – Residential Landlord and Tenant Act.

House bill 8108 bars landlords from raising the rent, in any twelve-month period, more than 4%. While well meaning, this rent-control legislation will create an impediment to the building and maintaining of affordable housing in our state.

Rhode Island landlords face financial challenges through high property taxes, increased costs of services and supplies, as well as costs associated with state regulatory compliance efforts, including the state rental registry. According to the Tax Foundation's 2026 State Tax Competitiveness Index, Rhode Island ranks in the bottom third of states for its property taxes (43rd).

It is important to keep in mind that many rental property owners do not have multiple properties. They may own a small rental or multi-family house that they rent in addition to their own home. Rents collected pay for maintaining a property, repairing items, and funding improvements to buildings. In addition, the state rental registry has added another cost and compliance requirement to their list of responsibilities.

If rent control is passed into law, landlords will be caught in a vice between a desire to keep a property safe for its tenants and the lack of funds to maintain the property. For many owners, this could lead to an abandonment of the building or to a conversion to single-family housing. Neither option helps the state to meet its growing need for affordable housing.

In addition, while the legislature has taken steps to stimulate housing production, it is expensive to build new housing, particularly in Rhode Island. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) released a report in May, 2022, stating that building material prices in 2022 were 19% higher than in 2021. (<https://www.nahb.org/blog/2022/05/building-materials-up-more-than-19-percent-year-over-year>)

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.

The NAHB recently noted that construction costs accounted for more than 64 percent of the average price of a new home in 2024 compared to 61 percent in 2022. This is a record high for construction costs since the inception of the organization's survey in 1998. They attribute the cost increases to inflation in the global economy.

For these reasons, we ask the committee to reject the passage of H.8108.

Sincerely,

David Chenevert, Chairman, Rhode Island Business Coalition

Associated Builders and Contractors – Rhode Island Chapter

Rhode Island Hospitality Association

Rhode Island Builders Association

Rhode Island Marine Trades Association

Rhode Island Staffing Association

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Subcommittee

Rhode Island Small Business Summit Tax and Budget Committee

cc. House Judiciary Committee members