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From: bounce@bounce.votervoice.net on behalf of Dakota Cowell
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Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 7:32 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: OPPOSE RENT CONTROL/JUST CAUSE H8109/S2294

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Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

This will have the opposite effect from what is intended. States that have adopted just cause legislation are CA, OR, NJ, WA, CO, and NY. If you look at the average rental rate in all the states, you will notice all of these states are in the top 20 states with the highest rent and three of them are in the top five (CA, NJ, & NY). That is despite the fact that they are far larger in terms of area than RI and all except NJ have a far lower population density. With this in mind, why would you copy their laws? Is the goal of this legislative body to force tenants into buildings or is it lower the costs RI experience? I really hope its the latter and if that is the case wouldn't is be wiser to copy the laws of the states that have a lower average rent than a majority of the states and specifically than us? Delaware for example is close to our size, has the fifth highest population density (we are second), and their average rent is \$500 less than ours (RI = \$2129 & DE = \$1,646). DE has no rent control and no just cause legislation. Delaware just recently (in 2025) abolished no fault evictions, so its safe to say they have been more landlord friendly than RI historically and they are significantly more landlord friendly when compared to RI in recent years. And it shouldn't surprise anyone that they added more residential units in the housing markets and in the rental market than RI and they have done so by a wide margin and for many years. That is even true when you compare the two on a per capita basis. This is one example, but there are thirty other states you can look at. Please do not copy the few states that are more expensive than us!

I am against just cause eviction laws and rent control measures. This bill not only removes a property owner's ability to serve a non-renewal notice to a resident at lease term's end, effectively granting residents a perpetual lease, but also imposes rent control with a maximum annual increase of 4%. Rent control policies are widely agreed upon by over 90% of economists to not work for overall affordability.

Although I acknowledge worries about the unjust removal of long-standing residents, I am convinced that this strategy is not the correct course of action and will adversely affect both property owners and residents. Advocates of just cause eviction argue that it shields long-time residents from unethical landlords. However, these constraints significantly curtail property owners' capacity to promptly tackle resident issues and expel disruptive or potentially harmful individuals. Such measures unsettle rental communities, clash with state laws addressing problematic properties, and deter investment in rental housing.

Under just cause eviction, housing providers can only evict residents for reasons explicitly listed in the law. While these protections seem reasonable, they hinder property owners from efficiently managing their properties. The bill mandates landlords to "show cause" and obtain a court order to terminate a lease, particularly challenging in cases involving criminal activities. This policy shifts the responsibility of providing proof and evidence of such activity to neighboring tenants. Most often, neighboring tenants have concerns with retaliation from problem tenants and may be uprooted from their own home out of fear. This scenario can be avoided when a landlord is free to exercise their rights and swiftly act.

Additional eviction and turnover is very costly. Property owners do not want to overzealously evict. The intention of a property owner is to generally attract stable, long-term, tenants, which means less loss due to vacancy and turnover costs which are in the thousands. It is untruthful to portray landlords as people who intend to remove people from their homes at any chance.

I am afraid that policies such as the one set forth in H809 and S2294 could have the potential to counteract many of the positive housing policies that have been set forth in Speaker Shekarchi's housing packages. As a state we must move in the direction of finding ways to work together and solving problems, rather than shifting blame and punishment amongst different parties. Please consider the detrimental impacts of this bill as well as any and all just cause and rent control bills would have. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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