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From: bounce@bounce.votervoice.net on behalf of Michael Pereira <user@votervoice.net>
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To: House Judiciary Committee
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Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

Just cause eviction laws can create unintended consequences by making it harder for property owners to manage their properties. This increased risk often leads to higher rents, stricter tenant screening, reduced housing supply, and discourages investment in rental housing—especially from small landlords. In the long run, these policies can limit housing availability and make it harder for renters to find homes.

Just cause eviction is simply a policy that prevents a landlord from not renewing a lease. This creates an irrevocable tenancy. Just cause eviction shifts the burden to neighboring tenants to bear the burden of proof in an eviction case. This can be uncomfortable or even dangerous for neighboring tenants to do so. Good tenants are much more likely to be displaced from their home when a landlord is unable to effectively manage the property and remove unruly tenants.

Example: An uncooperative tenant in a 6 unit building is conducting illegal activity in the property. Since the landlord does not live in the property, the only witnesses may be the innocent neighboring tenants. Those tenants often times are intimidated and fearful of filing complaints or police reports. If a landlord cannot remove a tenant easily, those good neighboring tenants may consider leaving as their only option. This scenario hurts all innocent parties involved (good tenants, landlords, and the community).

Furthermore a landlord may decide to hold applicants to a higher standard if they have no option for legal recourse. Under Just Cause eviction policy, landlords will be forced to hedge against more potential risk and will be less likely to give lesser qualified applicants a chance.

Additionally, this policy includes rent control which is known for destroying affordable housing goals, costing millions of dollars to implement, and reducing tax bases. Rhode Island cannot afford unnecessary strain. Alternatively, Rhode Island should adopt policies as outlined in the RIPEC report that increase housing and provide targeted relief to our most vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

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