

Testimony in Support of H 8113
House Judiciary Committee
Submitted by Kat McCorkle
March 18, 2026

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

The Rhode Island Center for Justice submits this written testimony to express its support for the passage of House Bill 8113. The Center for Justice practices landlord-tenant law, representing over 1,000 tenants in housing-related cases each year. Through our work on behalf of low-income Rhode Islanders, the Center for Justice is deeply familiar with the struggles of these households as they navigate our state's increasingly expensive and difficult housing market.

The Center for Justice is frequently contacted by tenants seeking assistance in the return of their security deposits. Many tenants rely on the return of their security deposits to pay for moving costs or new apartments. For many of the Center's clients, the return of even a thousand dollars can mean the ability to pay their utility bills or feed their families for a month.

While the Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (RLTA) as currently written provides tenants with a mechanism to have their security deposit returned to them, one significant barrier to the Center's clients abilities to recover their security deposits is unclear accounting on the part of the landlord. This proposed legislation provides much needed clarity for tenants as to where their deposit is being held and what amount they may be due back. The proposed legislation also provides tenants with a financial incentive to leave a unit in good condition by making the interest generated from the security deposit the property of the tenant. In situations where a tenant has been a resident at the property for many years, this legislation will also provide an additional buffer for repairs: even if a landlord withholds a portion of the deposit for permitted repairs or cleaning, the tenant will be better positioned to receive a meaningful portion of their deposit with the requirement that interest be paid to the tenant as well.

By requiring landlords to place their tenants' security deposits into interest-earning federally insured deposit accounts, this legislation will improve tenants' chances of receiving some or all of their deposits back with interest, putting money back into the pockets of working Rhode Islanders.

We encourage this committee to recommend passage of this important protection. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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