



Executive Office of Housing
State of Rhode Island
One Capitol Hill, 3rd Floor
Providence, RI 02908

March 18, 2026

The Honorable Representative Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: H 8141

Dear Chairwoman McEntee:

The Executive Office of Housing (EOH) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on H 8141, which would create the division of civil representation within the Executive Office of Housing and require a designated legal organization to provide legal assistance to all tenants who qualify in eviction proceedings. EOH submits this letter of concern for the bill as currently written.

EOH recognizes the importance of providing legal representation to tenants facing eviction and would like to highlight that the Governor's FY27 budget includes a \$90,000 allocation to Rhode Island Legal Services for this purpose. However, a civil legal assistance program does not belong within EOH. EOH does not have staff with the specialized legal expertise necessary to provide or oversee such representation. Moreover, this bill does not include funding to support the additional staff capacity required for implementation.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and welcome the chance to continue working with the Committee and bill sponsors as these proposals move forward.

Sincerely,

Deborah J. Goddard
Digitally signed by
Deborah J. Goddard
Date: 2026.03.18
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Deborah J. Goddard
Secretary of Housing

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
The Honorable Cherie L. Cruz
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy