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From: bounce@bounce.voterveice.net on behalf of Sandra Negron
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Dear Committee Clerk DiMezza,

I am writing to oppose H8141. I understand the desire to help tenants, and I fully support access to legal help for those who truly need it. However, this bill goes too far by creating a government-paid right to counsel for all tenants, even those who can afford their own lawyers. This program would come from taxpayer dollars, which could instead be used for creating more affordable housing or other programs that actually prevent evictions.

Small landlords, who make up the majority of property owners in Rhode Island, would be hit the hardest. They already face unpaid rent, property damage, and other losses, and now they would have to pay their own legal costs while tenants are represented for free. Many landlords represent themselves in court just like tenants do, so this creates an unbalanced system that punishes small property owners instead of supporting a fair resolution for everyone.

I oppose H8141. Right now, in Rhode Island, if tenants don't have enough money, they can get free legal help. These lawyers are already helping tenants at the courthouse. Instead of using state money to give free lawyers to every tenant, even those who can pay for their own, maybe we could use the money to offer more free mediation. This would help people who represent themselves in court, both landlords and tenants. It would make things faster, reduce the time spent in court, and even improve relationships between landlords and tenants.

I also consider it unbalanced that a tenant who has the financial means to pay a lawyer would not have to, however, a landlord regardless of their income would be responsible for paying for their own lawyer.

Thank you for considering my points on this bill.

Sincerely,

Sandra Negron
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