



May 19, 2026

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

Re: Written Testimony to Support 2026 – H7199

Chair McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Michelle Loranger, and I submit this written testimony as the Executive Director of Day One, in strong support of H7199, the Rhode Island Survivor Early Lease Termination Act. This bill makes a necessary and compassionate update to Rhode Island's landlord-tenant law by recognizing that survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other forms of abuse must be able to prioritize their safety without facing severe financial or housing consequences.

Day One has the honor to serve as Rhode Island's Sexual Assault Coalition and the RI Children's Network – State Chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs), as well as providing a myriad of direct services for 53+ years. Day One supports survivors across the full spectrum of interpersonal violence. For decades, Day One has provided acute response and ongoing advocacy and case management to victims and survivors through our 24-hour Helpline and crisis response services. Through this work, we have experienced firsthand survivors who face possible homelessness, bounce from short term temporary shelters, or couch surf. Often children are a part of this unhealthy and traumatic experience.

The implications of H7199 for those who hold real estate assets (property owners) are minimal as a landlord can simply re-rent the unit to a new tenant. By contrast, the consequences for survivors are profound. Without these protections, survivors are often forced to consider remaining in dangerous living situations because breaking a lease can result in financial penalties, ongoing rent liability, loss of a security deposit, or barriers to securing future housing. H7199 directly addresses this reality by allowing survivors to terminate a lease early without penalty when abuse has occurred, providing the financial flexibility necessary to relocate and secure safe housing for themselves and their families. The bill also includes critical protections that allow tenants to request a change of locks when they reasonably believe they are facing an imminent threat.

Additionally, H7199 prevents housing discrimination against survivors who exercise the right to basic safety. No one should be denied housing or rental assistance simply because they took steps to escape violence. These protections promote stability, safety, and fairness across Rhode Island's housing system.

H7199 is thoughtful, balanced, and urgently needed. I urge the House Judiciary Committee to support and advance this bill and affirm Rhode Island's commitment to protecting survivors and promoting safe, stable housing.

Day One respectfully urges the Committee to support and advance H7199.

Thank you for your time, your commitment to survivors, and your leadership on these critical issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Loranger".

Michelle Loranger, MPA
Executive Director