



RHODE ISLAND COALITION OF HOUSING PROVIDERS

www.ricohp.org

May 19, 2026

To Honorable Representative Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903
VIA Email: HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

RE: Letter in OPPOSITION to House Bill No. 8385

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Coalition of Housing Providers to express our opposition to H 8385 in its current form.

While we support the underlying intent of the bill—to protect young adult *dependents* aged 18–21 who are named in eviction filings despite not being responsible parties on a lease—we are concerned that the legislation, as written, lacks the clarity and procedural framework necessary for effective and fair implementation.

At present, **the court system does not provide a mechanism to seal records for a single individual** within a broader eviction case file in a **joint and several lease**.

Eviction records are tied to the case as a whole, not segmented by individual parties. Without structural changes to how records are maintained and accessed, the bill's core objective may not be practically achievable.

Additionally, the bill's language appears overly broad and ambiguous. As written, it could be interpreted to allow the sealing of eviction records for individuals who are in fact responsible parties, such as co-tenants or roommates named on a lease. This creates the potential for misuse and unintended consequences, undermining the balance between tenant protections and accountability.

To address these concerns, we respectfully urge the following amendments:

- Incorporate judicial discretion to ensure that sealing is applied only in appropriate cases.
- Clarify the definition of “dependent” and explicitly distinguish between non-responsible parties and co-tenants.
- Establish a clear procedural mechanism within the court system to allow for selective sealing of records at the individual level.
- Provide safeguards to prevent abuse of the sealing process.

With these revisions, the bill could better achieve its intended purpose while maintaining fairness and integrity within the housing and legal systems.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shannon Weinstein', written in a cursive style.

Shannon Weinstein
On Behalf of The RI Coalition of Housing Providers