

## Jill Cataldi

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**From:** Steve Stasiuk <sstasiuk@blackstoneri.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 29, 2021 9:57 AM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** Opposition to H6464

To the House Judiciary Committee,

With regard to bill H6464 - SEALING OF EVICTION FILES: I would like to state my vehement opposition to this proposal as it hampers rental property owners from being able to effectively conduct business and rewards or at least bad/illegal behavior and fails to hold people accountable for failing to meet their legal responsibilities as tenants.

Consider that rental property owners are essentially small business owners that provide housing for a wide range of Rhode Island, including our most economically vulnerable population. Anything that makes this job harder will have a direct impact on the providers of housing to perform the necessary vetting and approval of tenants. And placing a bad tenant can have dire results to the rental property owners by way of loss of rent/income which we all know can have downhill effects ultimately leading to neighborhood blight, poor building stewardship and foreclosure...all of which ultimately impact property taxes and of course, access to safe, affordable housing.

Please understand that the placing of tenants involves uncertainty and more importantly trust. Rental property owners make their decisions just like credit bureaus lend money/extend credit. Rental property owners eliminate uncertainty and liability by using things like past rental history (and evictions) to determine if a tenant is a trustworthy partner that will fulfill their obligations to paying rent etc. Just like lenders use credit score/history, foreclosures and bankruptcies to determine if a person is worthy of being extended credit, rental property owners rely on this accessible information to make sound business decisions. To make this information harder for the rental property owners is to make conducting business in this state at the rental property level that much more difficult.

Ultimately, if this bill is passed, our state leaders give carte blanche to adults who don't live up to their financial obligations by allowing them to hide their accountability for their actions. In our current climate and with Rhode Island's tenant-landlord agreement, it is already difficult to perform an eviction and only when the most egregious failures of meeting the legal obligations a tenant agrees to can an eviction proceed. To further hide a tenants bad behavior will only encourage them to repeat it as it will come at no cost except to the rental property owners.

I urge our elected representatives to consider this and to not pass this short-sighted bill.

Sincerely,

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