

I strongly oppose House Bill H 7987, which seeks to amend Section 45-24.3-17 of the General Laws regarding the issuance of notices of violations in the Housing Maintenance and Occupancy Code. While the bill aims to enhance tenant awareness of housing code violations, I believe that it introduces unnecessary burdens on landlords, undermines property rights, and fails to address the root causes of housing code violations. Here are several reasons why I oppose this legislation:

1. ****Unfair Burden on Landlords****: Requiring landlords to serve notices of violations directly to all affected tenants imposes an undue administrative burden and potential costs on property owners. Landlords may already face challenges in managing their properties and addressing violations promptly. This additional requirement adds complexity to the process without providing tangible benefits to landlords or tenants.
2. ****Infringement on Property Rights****: Mandating landlords to provide notices of violations to tenants represents an infringement on property rights. Landlords should have the autonomy to address housing code violations without being compelled to involve tenants directly. This requirement undermines the contractual relationship between landlords and tenants and could lead to disputes and conflicts between parties.
3. ****Failure to Address Root Causes****: While increasing tenant awareness of housing code violations is important, this approach fails to address the underlying factors contributing to violations. Many housing code violations stem from structural deficiencies, inadequate maintenance, or economic challenges faced by property owners. Instead of focusing solely on notification requirements, policymakers should invest in programs that promote property maintenance, provide resources for landlords, and improve housing quality.
4. ****Potential for Tenant-Landlord Conflicts****: Directly involving tenants in the enforcement of housing code violations could escalate tensions between landlords and tenants. Tenants may feel empowered to report minor issues or engage in disputes with landlords, leading to a breakdown in trust and communication. This approach risks exacerbating conflicts rather than fostering cooperative solutions to improve housing conditions.
5. ****Alternative Solutions****: Instead of imposing burdensome notification requirements, policymakers should explore alternative solutions to address housing code violations. This may include increasing funding for code enforcement agencies, providing incentives for property maintenance and upgrades, and offering support services to landlords and tenants. By taking a comprehensive approach,

policymakers can achieve better outcomes for both landlords and tenants while improving overall housing quality.

In conclusion, House Bill H 7987 fails to adequately address the complexities of housing code enforcement and imposes unnecessary burdens on landlords. We urge policymakers to reconsider this legislation and explore alternative approaches that prioritize collaboration, property rights, and sustainable solutions to improve housing conditions in Rhode Island.

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