

Joseph Solomon

I am writing in STRONG opposition to H7891 & 7989

I moved here from New York about 12 years ago, I had a few jobs, like Walmart and a few other places.

I, along with my wife, scrimped and saved money, worked on our credit and was able to apply with the help of RI housing to attain our first family house. When we purchased the home, we chose to keep the current tenant, an elderly person of 70+ years. Our Multifamily is not glamorous but it's ours.

These bills such as the proposed Just Cause Eviction policy, which means landlords would lose the ability to not renew a lease without a valid reason. As a landlord, this restricts my flexibility in managing my property.

Additionally, if I need to ask a tenant to vacate for legitimate reasons (such as non-payment or violation of lease terms), I would be required to pay them to move. This financial burden could be significant for small landlords. Where would that money come from???...

We work and pay all the bills, there is often not enough to save.

**Tenant Escrow of Rental Payments:**

The bills allow tenants to escrow rental payments rather than paying the landlord directly if there are violations. However, the specifics are unclear. This ambiguity could lead to disputes and administrative challenges.

As a landlord, I rely on timely rent payments to cover expenses like mortgage, maintenance, and property taxes. Any disruption to this process WILL affect my ability to manage the property effectively.

**Building Permit Restrictions:**

If violations are on record, the bills would prevent building permits from being issued. While this aims to ensure compliance, it could hinder necessary repairs or renovations of said violations.

As a landlord, I want to maintain and improve my property. These restrictions will delay the very essential upgrades, affecting the quality of housing I provide.

**Tenant Relocation Fee:**

The bills mandate that if I ask a tenant to move for purposes like renovation, condo conversion, or family occupancy, I must pay them a relocation fee. The fee amount would be set by a board created under this law, but to what end...

While I understand the intent to protect tenants, this provision places an additional financial burden on landlords. It might discourage property owners from making necessary changes to their properties.

These bills could significantly impact me as small landlord and my ability to manage and control my properties. As someone who has worked hard to save for and maintain rental properties, I urge lawmakers to consider the broader implications and unintended consequences of these proposed measures.

As we address the housing issues raised by Rhode Island bills H7891 and H7989, it's crucial to find a balanced approach that considers both tenants' needs and landlords' concerns.

Here are some potential solutions.

**Increase affordable housing stock:** Encourage the development of affordable housing units through incentives, tax breaks, or grants for builders and landlords.

**Public-private partnerships:** Collaborate with private developers, nonprofits, and government agencies to create more affordable housing options.

**Property maintenance incentives:** Offer tax breaks or grants to landlords who maintain their properties well, ensuring safe and habitable living conditions.

**Streamlined permitting process:** Simplify the process for obtaining building permits to encourage landlords to invest in property improvements.

**Community forums:** Involve landlords, tenants, and community members in discussions about housing policies to ensure diverse perspectives are considered.

**Task forces and working groups:** Create collaborative groups to address housing challenges and propose solutions.

Remember that finding solutions requires a delicate balance between protecting tenants and supporting landlords. By working together, we can create a housing market that benefits everyone and ensures safe, affordable homes for all Rhode Islanders.