

Dear Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee,

Subject: Opposition to Proposed Student Housing Landlord Licensing Requirement – H8363

My name is Jessica DeLorenzo, and I am the parent of a college student planning to live in off-campus housing in Providence, Rhode Island, next school year. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendment to bill H8363 requiring all student housing landlords to be licensed.

There is a common misconception that all college students come from families with significant financial means and can easily absorb the full cost of higher education, including housing. This is simply not the reality for many families, including mine, as I am a single mother with a sole income that is fully funding my daughter's education alone. The decision for my child to live off campus is largely driven by financial necessity. In many cases, off-campus housing is more affordable than on-campus options, which often require students to vacate during breaks and do not provide year-round housing, prohibiting my daughter from having a year-round job.

In addition, many colleges and universities do not have sufficient on-campus housing for upperclassmen and instead rely on off-campus housing to meet student demand. This makes the availability of affordable off-campus options not just a preference, but a necessity for many students to continue their education in Rhode Island.

Off-campus living also offers important benefits beyond cost savings. It allows students to gain independence, develop life skills, and fully engage in opportunities such as internships, summer employment, or coursework, experiences that are critical to their personal and professional growth. These opportunities may not be feasible if students are restricted to more expensive or less flexible on-campus housing options.

The proposed licensing requirement will likely result in increased costs for landlords, which will inevitably be passed on to student tenants in the form of higher rents and fees. This will make off-campus housing less accessible and could force students to live farther from campus, incur additional transportation costs, or choose housing arrangements that do not meet their academic or personal needs. In some cases, it may eliminate off-campus housing as a viable option altogether.

Additionally, these types of regulations risk discouraging landlords from offering student housing in Rhode Island, ultimately reducing the available housing supply. This could have broader economic impacts and place additional strain on students, families, and local communities.

While I understand the importance of ensuring safe and well-managed housing, this proposal appears to impose a disproportionate burden specifically on student housing providers and tenants. The result may be unintended consequences that negatively impact students and families who are already working hard to manage the rising costs of higher education.

I respectfully ask that you carefully consider these impacts and the broader implications of this legislation before moving forward.

Thank you for your time, attention, and thoughtful consideration of this issue.

Respectfully,
Jessica DeLorenzo

