



**RHODE ISLAND COALITION
OF HOUSING PROVIDERS**

www.ricohp.org

April 7, 2026

To The Honorable Representative Steven Casey
Chair, House Housing & Municipal Government
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

VIA Email: HouseMunicipalGovernmentandHousing@rilegislature.gov

RE: Letter in Opposition to House Bill No. 8363

Dear House Housing and Municipal Government Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Coalition of Housing Providers (RICOHP), we write to express our strong opposition to H8363, which would enable municipalities to implement licensing requirements for landlords who rent to students.

While we understand and appreciate the intent behind this proposal—to address concerns related to disruptive behavior in certain student-occupied properties—this legislation creates a broad, burdensome regulatory framework that will produce significant unintended consequences across Rhode Island’s housing market.

First, H8363 introduces yet another layer of bureaucracy that will increase the cost of providing housing. Licensing fees, administrative compliance, and the risk of penalties will ultimately be passed on to tenants, contributing to higher housing costs at a time when affordability remains a critical concern.

Second, this bill risks stifling housing availability. Property owners faced with unclear requirements, additional costs, and heightened liability may choose to exit certain segments of the rental market altogether. This contraction in supply will have a ripple effect, tightening availability not only for students but for renters across all demographics.

Additionally, H8363 raises serious fair housing concerns. The bill walks a fine line with discrimination and has the potential to create a disparate impact on protected classes, particularly age and familial status. There is currently no reliable or lawful method for a housing provider to verify whether an applicant is a “student.” As a result, property owners may feel compelled to make assumptions based on age or household composition, exposing themselves to liability under fair housing laws. Moreover, the structure of the bill places property owners in an untenable position. Owners must either:

- * Proactively obtain a license—incurring costs even if they do not ultimately rent to students, effectively creating a de facto statewide licensing requirement; or
- * Risk severe penalties, including fines of up to \$500 per day, for unknowingly renting to individuals who may later be classified as students.

This dynamic encourages overly cautious screening practices that could disproportionately impact younger applicants or non-traditional households who may be perceived as students but have no practical way to prove otherwise. The result is a policy that could unintentionally exclude qualified renters and undermine equitable access to housing. Finally, while addressing disruptive behavior is a valid policy goal, a broad licensing regime is not the appropriate solution. Targeted approaches through law enforcement and/or academic disciplinary measures of existing noise, nuisance, and property maintenance ordinances would more effectively address problematic conduct without imposing sweeping regulations on the entire housing market.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to oppose H8363. Rhode Island’s housing challenges require thoughtful, balanced solutions—not policies that increase costs, reduce supply, and introduce legal uncertainty for housing providers and renters alike.

Thank you for your consideration,

Shannon Weinstein

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Weinstein', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

On Behalf of
The Rhode Island Coalition of Housing Providers