



Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® & State-Wide MLS

April 7, 2026

The Honorable Stephen Casey, Chairperson
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

H8363 - AN ACT RELATING TO ZONING – STUDENT HOUSING LICENSES

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® (RIAR), we respectfully submit this testimony in opposition of H8363. RIAR represents more than 5,900 licensed real estate professionals who list, sell, lease, manage, and appraise residential and commercial real estate to make Rhode Island a better place to call home.

The Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® opposes H8363 because it does not incentivize property owners to offer student housing, as it only establishes an additional roadblock. Student housing provides parents and students with affordable accommodation as they attend colleges such as the University of Rhode Island, Bryant University, Brown University, and Providence College. While we understand that this legislation gives the option for municipalities to participate in, we are hesitant to support any new barriers that housing providers need to face. Additionally, we believe that colleges and universities should be held to an identical standard, in terms of complying with regulations, however, H8363 does not include such provisions. Lastly, it would be redundant to require licensing if people are complying with codes and regulations, especially where 2,629 Providence rentals have complied with the rental registry and lead law, in addition to 697 rentals in Narragansett and Kingston.

As previously stated, students rely on affordable alternatives for housing accommodations, rather than living on campus. In the Kingston and Narragansett areas near the University of Rhode Island campus, listings from Offcampus.uri.edu show rents ranging from about \$690 to \$1,770 for a three-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom unit that can accommodate three to four residents. Apartments.com reports a broader range of roughly \$750 to \$6,800 for one- to five-bedroom rentals, though the high end reflects larger units (for example, a five-bedroom at \$6,800 equates to about \$1,360 per person). Redfin data in this area indicates rents between \$2,200 and \$4,000 for two- to five-bedroom units. Having an additional barrier would ultimately give students no choice but to live on campus or pay more if fewer units are available.

We should not create obstacles that prevent opportunities. Our neighbors are willing and would choose to rent out their homes and spare rooms for an affordable rate for those who wish to achieve a higher degree in education. Some of which only ask that the graduates will repay similarly to future generations. If the state continues to create barriers such as registries and speak the rhetoric that people regurgitate toward landlords, people will be reluctant to provide housing for not only students, but others as well.

Therefore, I plead that the committee reject H8363, and instead work with communities on how property owners can better serve their tenants

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trevor J. Chasse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "C".

Trevor J. Chasse
Director, Government Affairs
Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®