

2023 -- S 0365

LC001862

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO PROPERTY -- RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Quezada, Britto, Kallman, Acosta, Murray, Euer, Burke, Gu, and Pearson

Date Introduced: February 16, 2023

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 34-18-16.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 34-18 entitled
2 "Residential Landlord and Tenant Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **34-18-16.1. Rent increases — Notice requirements.**

4 (a) Findings of fact.

5 (1) Housing insecurity and instability continue to grow in our state. According to the 2022
6 Housing Fact Book by HousingWorksRI at Roger Williams University these problems are
7 perpetuated by the sky-rocketing costs of housing, some of which have been exacerbated by the
8 ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The median single-family home price experienced a one-year
9 increase of fourteen percent (14%). In addition, the Providence-Metro area had the fifth highest
10 year-over-year rental cost increase in the United States at twenty-three and eight-tenths percent
11 (23.8%) due to the construction of few multi-family buildings and low vacancy rates.

12 (2) These increases mean that many Rhode Islanders, including those on fixed incomes,
13 pay too much of their income for housing and experience more competition for affordable units.
14 Worse yet, unable to keep pace with higher rents or locate adequate replacement housing, some
15 have lost their housing altogether, exacerbating the problem of homelessness in this state.

16 (3) These increases in costs, combined with inadequate wages, and insufficient available
17 units, generate pressures on persons and family units such that those who were able to initially
18 attain affordable housing are unable to retain that housing.

19 (4) For those faced with increased costs and a more competitive housing market, time can

1 be a precious resource to reconfigure household budgets or to find a new residence altogether. To
2 that end, an extension of the time within which a landlord must provide notice to a residential tenant
3 will, in effect, buy time for these tenants.

4 ~~(a)~~(b) Prior to an increase in rent being imposed by a landlord for a residential tenancy,
5 notice of the increase shall be given in writing to any tenant by a landlord at least ~~thirty (30)~~ one
6 hundred twenty (120) days prior to the effective date of the increase.

7 ~~(b)~~(c) A landlord ~~must~~ shall give at least sixty (60) one hundred fifty (150) days written
8 notice to month to month tenants over the age of sixty-two (62) years, before raising the rent.

9 (d) A violation of this section shall be deemed to be a deceptive trade practice pursuant to
10 § 6-13.1-2, and shall be punishable pursuant to the provisions of § 6-13.1-14.

11 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO PROPERTY -- RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT

1 This act would require that landlords of residential properties must give tenants notice of a
2 rent increase at least one hundred twenty (120) days prior to the effective date of the increase. The
3 act would also increase the notice requirement for rent increases for a month to month tenant who
4 is over the age of sixty-two (62) years to at least one hundred fifty (150) days.

5 A violation would be a misdemeanor and would be punishable by a fine of five hundred
6 dollars (\$500).

7 This act would take effect upon passage.

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