

2025 -- S 0580

LC002032

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO PROPERTY -- RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Acosta, and Kallman

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 34-18 of the General Laws entitled "Residential Landlord and Tenant
2 Act" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **34-18-62. Rent stabilization act.**

4 (a) During any private rental tenancy, the landlord shall not increase the rent:

5 (1) During the first year after the tenancy begins;

6 (2) At any time after the first year of the tenancy without giving the tenant written notice
7 in accordance with § 34-18-16.1; and

8 (3) Except as provided in subsections (b)(3) and (e) of this section, during any twelve (12)
9 month period, in an amount greater than four percent (4%).

10 (b) The written notice required under this section shall specify:

11 (1) The amount of the rent increase;

12 (2) The amount of the new rent;

13 (3) Facts supporting the exemption, if the increase is more than the amount allowed in
14 subsection (a)(3) of this section; and

15 (4) The date on which the increase becomes effective.

16 (c) A landlord terminating a tenancy with a thirty (30) day notice without cause as
17 authorized by § 34-18-37, shall not reset the rent for the next tenancy in an amount greater than
18 four percent (4%) above the previous rent.

19 (d) A landlord refusing to extend the tenancy at the request of the tenant, shall not reset the

1 rent for the next tenancy in an amount greater than four percent (4%) above the previous rent.

2 (e) A landlord is not subject to the provisions of this section when:

3 (1) The tenant leaves on their own volition and the landlord rents to a new tenant;

4 (2) The landlord is providing reduced rent to the tenant as part of a federal, state or local
5 program or subsidy; or

6 (3) The landlord is granted an exemption by the secretary of housing. A landlord may be
7 granted an exemption if they are able to demonstrate through sufficient evidence that:

8 (i) There has been necessary repairs and improvements made to the dwelling unit directly
9 related to maintaining or improving the health and/or safety conditions of the unit and to ensure the
10 unit is in compliance with § 34-18-22; or

11 (ii) There has been an increase in the municipal taxes and/or insurance of the dwelling in
12 an amount greater than four percent (4%) of the annual rent.

13 (4) If the landlord is granted an exemption pursuant to subsection (e)(3)(ii) of this section,
14 any increase of rent by the landlord shall not exceed the amount of the increase in the municipal
15 taxes and/or insurance, divided by the number of dwelling units of the property.

16 (f)(1) A landlord that increases rent in violation of this section or a landlord which
17 wrongfully evicts a tenant shall be liable to the tenant in an amount equal to three (3) months' rent
18 in addition to actual damages sustained by the tenant as a result of the tenancy termination.

19 (2) In addition to the remedies provided in subsections (f)(1) and (f)(3) of this section, if
20 the tenant prevails after a hearing or trial on the merits, the tenant may be awarded attorneys' fees,
21 if appropriate.

22 (3) In addition to the remedies provided in subsections (f)(1) and (f)(2) of this section, if
23 the landlord's conduct is shown to be motivated by malice or ill will, or when the landlord's actions
24 are reckless or callous indifference to the requirements of this section, the court may award punitive
25 damage.

26 (g) A tenant is entitled to recovery under this section if the tenant commences an action
27 asserting the claim within one year after the tenant knew or should have known the landlord
28 terminated the tenancy in violation of this section.

29 (h) This section does not create a right to increase rent that does not otherwise exist.

30 (i) This section does not require a landlord to compromise, justify or reduce a rent increase
31 that the landlord otherwise is entitled to impose.

32 (j) The secretary of housing shall enforce the provisions of this section.

1 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 limit rent increases to no more than four percent (4%) annually unless the
2 landlord is granted an exemption by the secretary of housing, and would provide tenants with a
3 civil action to recover damages, including an award of attorneys' fees and punitive damages, for
4 any violations.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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