

Testimony in Support of SB 2294 – Just Cause Evictions

Senate Committee on Judiciary

April 28, 2026

Hector Perez-Aponte, Racial Justice Policy Analyst, the Economic Progress Institute

The Economic Progress Institute strongly supports Senator Mack’s SB 2294, **which would prevent landlords from evicting tenants without just cause** and allow renters to renew their leases. This proposal will add much-needed protection for tenants.

Rhode Islanders value family, fairness, and safety. Just cause policies not only help keep families housed, but they also help keep our communities safe. Research shows that evictions are a leading cause of rising homelessness rates across the country.¹ When housing is lost, low-income renters often face significant barriers to securing new housing, such as past evictions that can hinder rental applications.² Evictions are not only catastrophic events for families; they also affect entire neighborhoods. Evidence shows that evictions can perpetuate cycles of crime, poverty, and disinvestment. According to the Eviction Lab, properties owned by landlords with frequent eviction filings were shown to have higher rates of assault, burglary, robbery, and other violent crimes.³ Accordingly, reducing the number and frequency of evictions is in the best interest of renters, communities, and the state.

It’s important to note that, **under this proposal, landlords would still be allowed to evict for specific reasons such as failure to pay rent or lease violations**; however, eviction for non-payment would not be permitted if it is the result of an unreasonable rent increase. A study reviewing the impacts of just cause ordinances across California indicated that such policies can significantly reduce both evictions and eviction filings, underscoring the efficacy of such renter protections.⁴ As Rhode Islanders continue to struggle and cities like Providence see dramatic increases in rent, we have also seen an alarming increase in homelessness. The homeless population in RI increased by nearly 35% from 2023 to 2024 and has more than doubled since 2019.⁵ WJR reported in January 2025 that **Rhode Island had the second highest percentage of chronic homelessness in the country**.

SB 2294 would help ensure that families are better able to maintain stable housing and avoid the devastating consequences of eviction. **We strongly urge the passage of this bill.**

¹ <https://homelesslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ProtectTenants2018.pdf>

² [https://www.publicsource.org/eviction-collateral-impact-displacement-employment-transit-school-mental-health/#:~:text=\(Photo%20via%20Adobe%20Stock\),hurt%20a%20tenant's%20mental%20health.](https://www.publicsource.org/eviction-collateral-impact-displacement-employment-transit-school-mental-health/#:~:text=(Photo%20via%20Adobe%20Stock),hurt%20a%20tenant's%20mental%20health.)

³ <https://evictionlab.org/extractive-landlords-and-crime/>

⁴ <https://jpia.princeton.edu/news/effect-just-cause-eviction-ordinances-eviction-four-california-cities#:~:text=This%20analysis%20of%20four%20California%20cities%20suggests,filing%20rates%20dropped%20by%200.780%20percentage%20points.>

⁵ WJR [Rhode Island has second highest percentage of chronic homelessness in country](#)