

To: The House Committee on General & Housing
From: Alex Karambelas, Policy Advocate, ACLU of Vermont
Re: H. 169- *An act relating to amending the prohibitions against discrimination in public accommodations and housing*
Date: April 17th 2025



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The ACLU of Vermont strongly supports H. 169- *An act relating to amending the prohibitions against discrimination in public accommodations and housing*, working to make Vermont a safe place to live for all members of our community. We are writing to the committee today in response to a proposed amendment presented by the Vermont Landlord Association:

(a) A landlord or a landlord's agent shall not:

~~(2) request the Social Security number of an individual or a member of an individual's household in order to apply to enter into a rental agreement for a residential dwelling unit or to conduct a criminal background or credit check.~~

(2) deny an application to rent on the basis that the applicant or a member of the applicant's household has not been issued a Social Security number.

We believe this language change will significantly undermine the bill's intent to protect immigrants from discrimination within housing rentals. In practice, an applicant unable to provide requested SSN information would essentially be disclosing a lack of such documentation to a landlord. By effectively identifying which applicants have or do not have a SSN, landlords would become "keepers" of immigration status information. While there is no current liability risk to landlords renting to undocumented persons under state or federal law, making immigration status disclosure a required practice within housing rental applications could create unintended consequences. As the Trump administration works to heavily increase detainment and deportation of immigrants, efforts to safeguard information related to immigration status can protect U.S. citizens from holding information related to these proceedings.

Sincerely,

Alex Karambelas, Policy Advocate, ACLU of Vermont