

From: Angela Zaikowski
Date: Monday, April 28, 2025 at 1:38 PM
To: Marc B. Mihaly
Cc: Chris Rice
Subject: [External] H.169

Hello Chair Mihaly –

I am writing to follow-up on the revisions made to H.169 by the Committee and to provide some feedback regarding those changes.

I still understand the problem this bill is trying to fix is how people apply for housing who do not have a social security number (for whatever reason).

The revisions made to H.169 still do not directly address this issue and will have much broader impacts on the rental community. As written, this statute would allow anyone to not provide a social security number as a part of an application. The Committee received a lot of information from multiple witnesses about the requirement of a social security number to access most credit and background checking systems and that there would be questions about the accuracy of any reports run without that identifier. The ability to adequately and accurately screen potential applicants is critical for housing providers.

In addition, Subsection (b) creates and places an affirmative disclosure and notification requirement on Housing Providers, something not found anywhere else in the Landlord-Tenant statute.

I would offer the following suggested language change, that I believe still accomplishes the goal of this addition:

(b)(1) If an applicant for residential housing does not have a Social Security Number, a landlord shall accept any of the following in order to conduct a background or credit check:

(A) an individual taxpayer identification number; or

(B) an original or a copy of any form of government-issued identification.

~~(2) A residential rental application shall inform an applicant that the applicant may provide any of the above forms of identification in order to conduct a background or credit check.~~

I am also reiterating my concerns related to the addition of the protected class “Immigration Status” to the list of protected classes under Vermont Fair Housing Law. In just the past week, we have seen some of the federal government’s stance on this issue, which included the arrest of a Judge in Wisconsin. The US Attorney General also released from statements this weekend which make it pretty clear

they intend to prosecute anyone harboring or assisting persons with no legal status, which would include Housing Providers.

I am happy to provide further testimony to the Committee if you would find that useful.

Thank you,
Angela



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