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To: Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
From: Jean Murray, Senior Housing Attorney jmurray@vtlegalaid.org
Re: H. 772
Date: April 10, 2026

Thirty percent of Vermont households are renters. Half of them pay more than 30% of their income for rent. Median rents increased 40% in the last five years. Vacancy rates have been very low for years. Vermont's rate of people experiencing homelessness is fourth highest in the nation and continues to increase. The number of evictions filed in court has increased 9% since 2019; an unknown number of tenancy terminations have caused tenants to move out to avoid being taken to court. Vermont has a **housing crisis**. Unavailability, Unaffordability, Instability. It affects Vermont's economy because rents have increased, but Vermont incomes have not increased. Vermont needs workers and consumers, but they cannot afford to live here.

H. 772 does not respond to this crisis. There is no logical reason, **no evidence** of any kind to explain why evicting tenants faster will make housing more stable, affordable, or available.

The bill **does not balance** the benefits to landlords and tenants. In all things landlord-tenant, the scales are already tipped towards landlords. The market already favors landlords; the law already gives landlords more right to special court procedures and tenant fewer procedural options. H. 772 weights in favor of landlords. **It gives landlords** many things, shorter notice times, more grounds for eviction, more options to deliver notice, ability to charge fees at the time of application, the continued ability to raise rent by any amount, the continued ability to evict for no cause and at the expiration of a lease term of time. It gives an expedited eviction process that does not require testimonial evidence in court.

H. 772 **takes rights away from tenants**. It allows applicants to be charged fees, rent to be raised more than once every 12 months, standardizes three months up front to move in, takes away time to cure a non-payment, reduces time to defend against an allegation of breach of lease or law adds additional, and sometimes non-sensical grounds for eviction.

H. 772 **will not work** to achieve its stated purpose. The reason advanced for the changes in H. 772 is that it will address "systemic court inefficiencies." Though there are stories, there is no evidence that the court system is inefficient, but if efficiency in kicking tenants out of their homes is what is desired, H. 772 will not do it. From a practitioner's point of view, H. 772 **injects chaos** into a system that has functioned predictably for 40 years, without addressing how the changes would play out. For example, current law, and longstanding practice allows landlords to send two notices at a time, one for non-payment and one for no cause. H. 772 created a separate

process for non-payment, with onerous requirements for tenants, and a faster timeline, but no cause (which is a more certain way to get a judgment of eviction) gets the current process. As it is now written, a tenant could have to face two simultaneous processes.

The provisions in H. 772 came from the committee; other than “faster for landlords” no policy goal was identified. Stakeholders did not craft the bill; there were no compromises to the goal of aiding landlord autonomy, decreasing court discretion, and truncating tenant rights.

H. 772 will make Vermont’s housing crisis worse and increase homelessness. It should not pass.