

June 30, 2025

The Hon. Daniel McKee  
Governor  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

VIA MAIL

**RE: REQUEST TO VETO 25-S 213A, AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY – SELF-SERVICE STORAGE FACILITIES**

Dear Governor McKee:

The R.I. Coalition to End Homelessness, the R.I. Homeless Advocacy Project, the R.I. Center for Justice, and the American Civil Liberties Union of Rhode Island respectfully request that you veto S-213A, a bill which would authorize the selling of property within a self-service storage facility without sufficient notification to the owner of that property. If enacted, this legislation will undoubtedly increase the burdens faced by low-income individuals and those experiencing homelessness, many of whom rely on these facilities to store their belongings.

At a time of rising poverty and extensive homelessness, people who are forced to leave their belongings in a self-storage facility deserve more consideration and notice, not less. This bill moves in the opposite direction, making it easier for individuals to lose everything they own with little or no meaningful notice.

Over the last decade, the problem of homelessness has substantially risen – and, with it has come a proliferation of self-storage facilities. Yet this legislation marks the third time in 13 years that the General Assembly has diluted the safeguards that once ensured that renters were properly notified of any sale of their stored property following default. In 2012, the statute was weakened in numerous ways, including eliminating a requirement that initial notice be given by certified mail, significantly reducing the time before which an owner could take action to enforce a lien after default, and vastly minimizing the public notice of default requirements. The ACLU and others raised concerns at that time about the adverse impact these changes could have on destitute individuals, but those objections were to no avail.

Despite those concerns, in 2023, the General Assembly further abridged the notification obligations to renters, by reducing the number of times a newspaper had to publish notice of the imminent sale of the property when personal notice could not be served, and reducing the time by which a claim of owed money had to be paid. Yet this current legislation cuts back on notification requirements even further, while maintaining an absurd web posting notification requirement from the 2012 amendments, providing for publication of default on a website “once a week for two (2)

consecutive weeks.” Exactly how a renter is supposed to know what day or time this “once a week” notice will appear on a website remains a mystery.

As you know, in recent years the General Assembly has passed a number of bills designed to address the state’s housing crisis. This legislation, however, takes a step backward and is notable for its failure to take into account its effect on some of the most vulnerable people experiencing this crisis. It is also worth pointing out that, recognizing the impact of this troubling decade-long effort to make it easier to take and sell the property of people experiencing severe financial troubles, the House of Representatives, over the opposition of House leadership, approved a floor amendment to the House version of this bill [H-5364Aam] that attempted to restore some balance to the process.

The floor amendment expanded the time before enforcement of a lien and sale of the property could occur, and required the facility owner to take additional steps to try to reach the defaulting renter before placing property up for sale. Ultimately, however, the House instead ended up approving the Senate version of the bill, which did not include any of the House floor amendment language, making this legislation an unfortunate and harmful outlier in that body’s approach to the housing crisis.

During this continued and well-recognized time of housing instability, we therefore urge you to veto this legislation in order to allow the General Assembly the opportunity to come back next session and adopt a more balanced approach that will provide sufficient process for individuals who may often be fighting homelessness and help them avoid losing precious belongings without adequate notice.

Thank you for considering our views, and please feel free to let us know if you have any questions about this.

Sincerely,

Steven Brown  
**American Civil Liberties Union of Rhode Island**

Jennifer Wood  
**Rhode Island Center for Justice**

Kimberly Simmons  
**Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness**

Eric Hirsch, Ph.D.  
**Rhode Island Homeless Advocacy Project**