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**ACLU OF RI POSITION: OPPOSE**

**TESTIMONY ON 24-H 7238,  
RELATING TO SELF-SERVICE STORAGE FACILITIES  
February 1, 2024**

The ACLU has deep concerns about the extent to which this bill would authorize the selling of property within a self-service storage facility without sufficient notification to the owner of the property. Those concerns are exacerbated by the fact that less than a year ago, the General Assembly weakened the notification requirements that this bill seeks to weaken even further.

Notification requirements to delinquent storage facility occupants first began getting watered down 12 years ago when the General authorized notification to renters by email or regular mail instead of, as was previously required, by certified mail. At the time, the ACLU raised objections to the change, concerned that it unduly restricted the rights of individuals to be properly notified of their default and to respond accordingly. We noted that some renters might not receive their notices via mail in time to meet the obligations required by the law, or might never receive messages sent via email because they went to spam, resulting in the loss of their belongings.

Undeterred by those concerns, last year the General Assembly reduced the notification obligations to renters more – first, by reducing from three to one the times a newspaper notice of the imminent sale of their property had to be published when they could not be served with personal notice and, second, by reducing from 30 to 20 days the time by which a claim of owed money had to be paid. Not satisfied with these revisions, the storage facilities are back this year to cut back on notification requirements even more.

At a time of rising poverty and extensive homelessness, people often forced to leave their belongings in a self-storage facility deserve more consideration, not less. It is important that people using storage facilities not unfairly lose the ability to retain their possessions. We therefore urge the committee to reject these amendments to the current notification provisions. Instead, the committee might wish to examine if the current system provides enough process for individuals to avoid losing precious belongings without adequate notice.