



April 23, 2019
Senator Erin Lynch Prata
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee

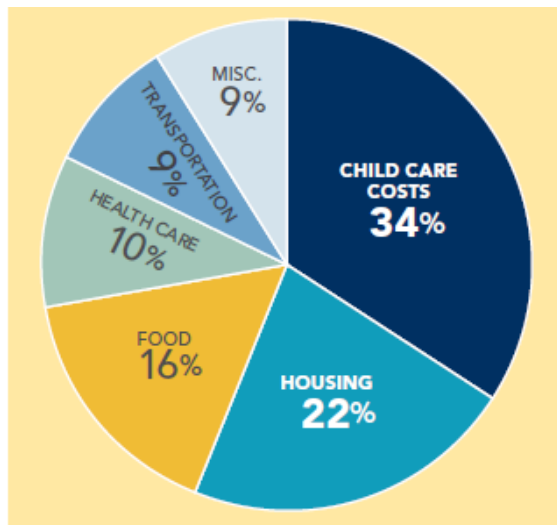
Re: S-331

Dear Chair Lynch Prata and Members of the Committee:

The Economic Progress Institute strongly supports passage of S-331, which would prohibit discrimination in housing based on a person's receipt of a lawful source of income.

According to the *Rhode Island Standard of Need* ("RISN") which we publish every two years, housing costs are the second largest expense (after child care) for a working family. The 2018 RISN shows the distribution of basic needs expenses for a parent, toddler and school age child.

Rhode Island has a severe shortage of affordable and safe housing. Many working families are unable to



find and afford a decent apartment in which to raise their children. When a family receives rental assistance through the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) they have a "golden ticket" that should enable them to rent an apartment in their neighborhood of choice. Yet many who receive the voucher after waiting months or years, are unable to use it because landlords are allowed to reject them as tenants simply because they are using the voucher.

Discrimination based on source of income is as harmful to families and individuals and to our public well-being as is discrimination based on race, religion, marital status and other statuses that are protected

by Rhode Island's Fair Housing law. Rhode Island should join the other four New England states (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine and Vermont); ten other states; Washington, DC; and 76 counties and municipalities that have banned discrimination based on source of income.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.