



January 21, 2025

Honorable Chairman Joe Alexander
House Housing Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 305
33 N State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Opposition to HB 60

Chairman Alexander and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. My name is Holly Stevens, and I am the Director of Public Policy at NAMI New Hampshire, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI NH is a non-profit, grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the lives of all people impacted by mental illness and suicide through support, education and advocacy. On behalf of NAMI NH, I am writing today in opposition to HB 60, relative to the termination of tenancy at the expiration of the tenancy or lease term.

As a critical social determinant of health, stable housing is a crucial element of recovery for individuals living with a mental illness. Housing instability can contribute to stress, anxiety, and other mental health symptoms. At the same time, the symptoms of a serious mental health condition can make finding and maintaining housing more challenging, especially given the discrimination that people with a mental illness may experience in the rental process. When this basic need isn't met, people may cycle in and out of homelessness, jails, shelters, and hospitals.

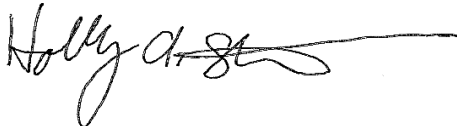
Under NH law, in order to terminate a tenancy, the landlord must have "just cause" and cannot end the tenancy for any reason or no reason at all. HB 60 would eliminate this current protection that NH law affords renters. As stated above, individuals with serious mental health conditions already experience discrimination in the housing rental process. HB 60 would only suffice to make it easier for landlords to discriminate against a person who they find out during the tenancy period has a mental illness. Landlords have the right, at the beginning of a tenancy, to decide who they want to rent to. Further, landlords have the right under current law to terminate tenancy for many reasons, including refusal to pay rent, behavior of the tenant that adversely affects the safety of other tenants or the landlord, or any business or economic reason not based on the action or inaction of the tenant. Finding HB 60 inexpedient to legislate would not change these landlord protections in the law. Finding HB 60 inexpedient to legislate would only continue the protections in law for renters.

Find Help, Find Hope.

NAMI New Hampshire • 85 North State Street • Concord, NH 03301
InfoLine: 800-242-6264 • Tel. 603-225-5359 • Fax 603-228-8848 • info@naminh.org / www.NAMINH.org

Given the housing crisis facing NH and the overrepresentation of individuals with a mental health condition in the of unhoused population, the passage of HB 60 would only contribute to the increase of unhoused, hospitalized, or incarcerated individuals with a mental illness. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote Inexpedient to Legislate for HB 60.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Holly A. Stevens", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Holly A. Stevens, Esq.