



March 31, 2026

Honorable Chairman William Gannon
Senate Judiciary
State House Room 100
107 North Main St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Opposition to HB 1499

Dear Chairman Gannon and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. 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 speaking today in opposition to HB 1499, relative to additional grounds for eviction under the landlord and tenant statute.

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.

In New Hampshire, appropriate housing for individuals with a serious mental illness and their families is an even greater challenge, with a lack of affordable and supportive housing often leading to negative outcomes. This challenge is only exacerbated by the back-door issues related to the emergency department boarding crisis, where individuals who are ready for discharge back into the community from NH Hospital are unable to do so due to a lack of appropriate resources to support their recovery.

At a time when access to housing is a challenge for all, especially those living with a mental health condition and their families, HB 1499 only serves to create a greater challenge for Granite Staters who are simply looking after their basic needs. Under current law, property owners in NH already have sufficient mechanisms and flexibility

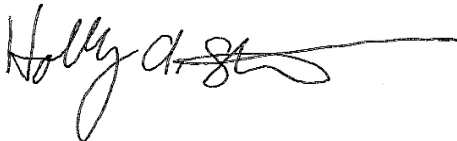
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to terminate tenancy, so long as proper procedures are followed and the reason for termination relates to the tenancy itself. HB 1499 would allow property owners to terminate tenancy for past events, including those that may have occurred for up to 5 years before tenancy began.

This policy essentially enables property owners to sidestep other legal standards and evict tenants for any reason, so long as the conditions laid out in HB 1499 are met. Meaning, if a tenant complains about the issue of disrepair in the apartment, a landlord can investigate the background of the individual complaining, and if they find a felony from four and a half years ago, they can evict. Additionally, the bill allows for complete termination of tenancy, even if only a sole occupant of the rental has been convicted of the relevant crimes. Although this provision is not mandatory, it is within the discretion of the court to terminate the tenancy for all due to a past criminal conviction on one individual. For instance, an entire family can be evicted if an adult child has been convicted for possession of a controlled drug. This change undermines legal protections for tenants throughout NH and will likely have an outsized impact on people with a mental illness with prior justice system involvement or who have a substance use disorder, as well as their families. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to recommend Inexpedient to Legislate for HB 1499.

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.

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