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Baddour Votes to Protect Housing Rights of Victims

(Boston, MA) – The Senate on Tuesday voted to give tenants and occupants who have been victims of stalking, rape, domestic violence and sexual assault more rights and protections in leasing agreements.

Senator Steven A. Baddour (D-Methuen) said the bill will provide necessary safeguards for victims.

“These residents should have the security of knowing that they can rent a home and not be stuck in an unsafe situation,” Senator Baddour said. “This legislation will give victims more resources and options for safe housing practices.”

The legislation will allow tenants of rented housing the option of prematurely terminating their rental contracts if they notify the owner in writing that they, or a member of their household, is a victim of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault or stalking.

“Maintaining and securing safe and affordable housing is often one of the most difficult obstacles facing victims of domestic violence, rape and stalking”, continued Senator Baddour. “Passage of this bill will ensure that such victims do not face housing discrimination, and will provide them with the ability to leave an unsafe environment without facing undue financial penalty.”

The bill also mandates that landlords change exterior locks upon request of their victimized or vulnerable tenants.

Furthermore, this legislation will prohibit landlords from having any bias in offering housing to applicants who are victims.

The bill will now go to the House of Representatives for further action.

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