Rhode Island Coalition
for the Homeless

1070 Main St, Suite 304, Pawtucket, RI 02860
www.rihomeless.org (401) 721-5685

7 July 2020

The Honorable Robert Craven
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for H7947

Chairman Craven and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

The Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless works collaboratively to create and advance lasting solutions to prevent and homelessness in Rhode Island. Formerly incarcerated Rhode Islanders are more likely to experience homelessness, due in large part to the many barriers folx face when looking for gainful employment. The Coalition strongly supports H7947, which requires that the presence of a record alone does not become a barrier to licensure for an otherwise qualified individual and asks that licensing agencies take the time to consider the circumstances surrounding each applicant's conviction.

Formerly incarcerated people are 10x more likely to become homeless. 32% of Rhode Islanders involved in the correctional system experience chronic homelessness. Safe, secure, and affordable housing is key to reducing recidivism. However, people need to earn a living wage to afford housing, and continued discrimination based on incarceration can make that virtually impossible. This discrimination gets magnified for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, who are also more likely to experience homelessness than white people. Passing H7947 takes an important step forward in remedying this injustice.

Thank you for taking up H7947 during this nontraditional legislative session, and we urge you to pass the bill out of committee and send it with your support to the full House for a vote.

Sincerely,

Kristina Contreras Fox
(401) 424-1635
kristina@rihomeless.org