

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing to support the passage of Rhode Island House Bill 7854: Enhancing Condominium Transparency and share my experiences as a condominium home owner regarding transparency and communication practices within my association.

I support House Bill 7854, as it strengthens transparency and accountability in condominium association governance, for the following reasons:

Open Board Meetings

Open board meetings allow home owners to understand how decisions are being made, how funds are being used, and what issues are being discussed. This builds trust, reduces conflict, and ensures that board actions reflect the best interests of the entire community.

In my association, board meetings have been closed to home owners for the past 18 years. Home owners are not permitted to attend, observe discussions, or hear the reasoning behind important decisions that affect our property, finances, and quality of life.

This has created an environment where home owners are disconnected from the decision-making process and lack clarity about how or why certain actions are taken.

Allowing open meetings (with exception of Executive Session) gives home owners the opportunity to stay informed and contribute appropriately.

Access to Meeting Minutes

Access to meeting minutes within 30 days of approval is essential for transparency and responsible community oversight. When minutes are delayed for months, home owners cannot stay informed about decisions affecting budgets, maintenance, rule changes, or future planning.

Over the past three years, I have repeatedly contacted the board and property management company to request updated minutes and budget reports. As of today, the minutes have not been updated since June of 2025, and the budget reports have not been updated since December of 2025.

As a home owner, who pays monthly fees and entrusts the board with the management of my home and community, it is difficult to comprehend how such significant delays in posting minutes and budget reports would be acceptable practice.

Financial Reviews Every Five Years

The requirement for condominium associations to conduct a financial review at least every five years is fundamental fiscal management. Financial reviews help ensure the accuracy of accounting records, allow for the early detection of errors, and verify that association funds are

being managed responsibly. A practice that protects both home owners and the long-term financial health of the community.

In my association, there have been two different property management companies and three different boards over the last 18 years. However, the association has never conducted an audit or financial review. In the absence of periodic reviews, home owners have no means to confirm how association funds are being managed or to determine whether financial practices adhere to fundamental standards of accountability.

Implementing a five-year review requirement would promote consistent and transparent financial stewardship.

Ombudsman Program

An ombudsman program offers a neutral avenue for guidance, mediation, and oversight by providing an impartial, accessible resource to assist in resolving disputes, addressing concerns, and ensuring boards and property management companies follow consistent standards and comply with statutory requirements.

In my association, enforcement of rules has been inconsistent, with certain home owners being held accountable while others are not, resulting in selective enforcement and creating an environment in which individuals who ask questions or raise concerns may experience retaliation.

Since there is no alternative dispute-resolution process, aside from hiring an attorney, home owners have no safe or neutral avenue to address issues without fear of personal or financial repercussions.

The establishment of an ombudsman program provides an impartial, accessible resource to assist home owners.

As a condominium home owner, House Bill 7854 represents a critical step toward strengthening transparency, accountability, and trust within condominium associations and ensuring home owners have a voice in the governance of their communities.

I respectfully request your support in passing this bill.

Sincerely,

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