

## Testimony in Support of Rhode Island House Bill 7854 – Enhancing Condominium Transparency

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the passage of Rhode Island House Bill 7854: Enhancing Condominium Transparency. I offer this testimony as a condominium homeowner in Rumford, Rhode Island, and as a professional committed to governance, accountability, and equitable practices.

House Bill 7854 represents a necessary and timely step toward strengthening transparency, accountability, and trust within condominium associations. Based on my experience, I would like to highlight several key areas where this legislation provides meaningful improvement:

### Open Board Meetings

Open board meetings are foundational to effective governance. They allow homeowners to understand how decisions are made, how funds are allocated, and what priorities are being advanced on behalf of the community.

In my association, meetings have historically been closed, limiting homeowners' ability to observe discussions or understand the rationale behind decisions that directly impact our homes and financial obligations. This lack of access creates distance between the board and homeowners, leading to confusion, mistrust, and unnecessary conflict.

Allowing open meetings—while maintaining appropriate executive sessions—ensures transparency, fosters trust, and promotes shared accountability.

### Timely Access to Meeting Minutes and Financial Information

Timely access to meeting minutes and financial documentation is essential for informed homeowner participation and oversight.

Delays in providing minutes or financial updates hinder homeowners' ability to stay informed about budgets, maintenance planning, and policy decisions. As stakeholders who contribute financially to the association, homeowners should have reasonable and consistent access to this information.

Establishing clear expectations for the timely release of approved minutes and financial reports will strengthen transparency and support responsible governance.

### Periodic Financial Reviews

The requirement for financial reviews at least every five years is a critical safeguard.

Regular financial reviews ensure that accounting practices are accurate, funds are managed responsibly, and potential issues are identified early. Without these reviews, homeowners have limited visibility into the financial stewardship of the association.

Implementing this requirement promotes fiscal discipline, protects homeowners' investments, and reinforces long-term financial stability.

### Establishment of an Ombudsman Program

An ombudsman program provides an essential, neutral mechanism for guidance, oversight, and dispute resolution.

In my experience, homeowners often have limited options when concerns arise—frequently requiring legal action as the only recourse. This creates barriers and discourages individuals from raising legitimate concerns.

An ombudsman offers an accessible and impartial resource to address disputes, promote consistent rule enforcement, ensure compliance with statutory requirements, and reduce the risk of retaliation or inequitable treatment.

### Conclusion

As a condominium homeowner in Rumford, I believe House Bill 7854 is a critical step toward modernizing condominium governance in Rhode Island. It reinforces transparency, strengthens accountability, and ensures that homeowners have appropriate visibility and voice in the management of their communities.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support and advance this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Lucy Rose*

Lucy Rose  
Rumford, RI