

Chris O'Brien

From: Rev Nev <nevillebedford@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 1:26 PM
To: Rep. Blazejewski, Christopher R.; House Finance Committee
Subject: Article 5, Question 3 in the Governor's proposed budget SUPPORT

I am writing this letter of support as a private citizen, as well as a member of the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness. The Coalition is a proud member of Homes RI, a coalition of organizations working together to increase and preserve the supply of safe, healthy, and affordable homes throughout Rhode Island.

I am writing today **in support of Article 5, Question 3** in the Governor's proposed budget. This question proposes \$100 million to increase affordable and middle income housing production and infrastructure, support community revitalization, and promote homeownership.

Rhode Island is facing challenges with an aging population, falling labor force participation, stagnant population growth, and constrained housing supply. Increases in rent and sales prices have far outpaced income gains, placing a heavy burden on virtually every Rhode Islander who is currently renting, looking to purchase a home, or seeking a change to their living situation. The heaviest burden is felt by Rhode Islanders with the lowest incomes - older adults, people with disabilities, and workers in many industries that undergird our economy - nursing assistants, restaurant workers, delivery drivers, education aids - to name a few.

In conclusion, **I strongly urge the Committee to support this budget article and question (Article 5, Question 3) and consider increasing the proposed amount to \$150 million to produce and preserve affordable homes for low and moderate income Rhode Islanders.**

Sincerely, Neville Bedford