



**Senior Agenda
Coalition of RI**

70 Bath Street
Providence, RI 02908

April 23, 2024

To: Chairman Marvin Abney and Members, House Finance Committee

From: Maureen Maigret, Policy Advisor

RE: Testimony in Support of H7257

On behalf of the Senior Agenda Coalition of RI, I am pleased to support **H7257** sponsored by Representatives Cotter, Speakman, McGaw, Kazarian, Donovan, Spears, Potter, Alzate, Kislak and Morales that would provide a targeted source of funds to develop affordable housing for our older population.

The Senior Agenda Coalition of RI is a non-profit organization that works to educate the public and our government officials about the needs of older Rhode Islanders and to advocate for policies and legislation to improve their quality of live.

In R.I. along with many states throughout the nation, the issue of housing affordability is front and center as housing costs -whether to purchase a home or to rent one - have increased so dramatically. The dramatic increase in housing costs has a considerable impact on older adults many of whom live on fixed incomes.

Census data informs us that 12% of R.I. older households live below the federal poverty level of \$15,060; 27% have income less than \$25,000; 50% less than \$50,000. Census data also shows that 32% of older homeowners and 53% of older renters are housing cost-burdened meaning they pay more than 30% of their income on housing. Using 2022 data from the US Census American Community Survey tables, a National Low Income Housing Coalition Study found 43% of Extremely Low-Income Household Renters (defined as below the FPL or 30% of area median income) were seniors. (See attachment)

There are wait lists, often years long, for subsidized housing units for older adults and we hear heart-wrenching stories of older persons facing rent increases they cannot afford that leave them wondering where they can live and fear being unhoused. A RI Housing Management Information System (HMIS) Issue Brief Summary shows 161 persons age 65+ in shelter as of 3/25/2024 with an average length of stay of 271 days (Attachment B).

This bill addresses the extreme need to provide affordable housing for more of our state's lower-income older households by creating a targeted fund for this purpose. It would increase the conveyance tax for residential properties sold above \$2,000,000 to a rate of \$3.30 per \$500, to be collected by RI housing and used for elderly affordable housing. The Senior Agenda Coalition urges you to recommend the legislation as one way to address the housing needs of lower income older adults. Thank you for your consideration.

ATTACHMENT A.

2024 RHODE ISLAND HOUSING PROFILE

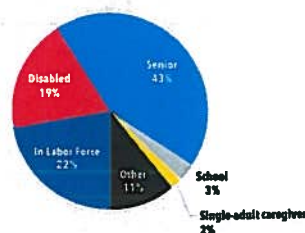
50th ANNUAL REPORT ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Across Rhode Island, there is a shortage of rental homes affordable and available to extremely low income households (ELI), whose incomes are at or below the poverty guideline or 30% of their area median income (AMI). Many of these households are severely cost burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing. Severely cost burdened poor households are more likely than other renters to sacrifice other necessities like healthy food and healthcare to pay the rent, and to experience unstable housing situations like evictions.

SENATORS: Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse

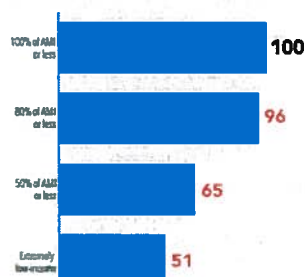


EXTREMELY LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS



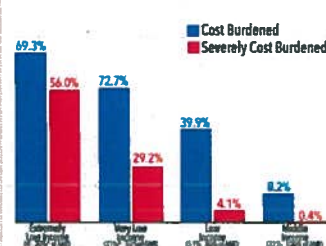
Note: Mutually exclusive categories applied in the following order: senior, disabled, in labor force, enrolled in school, single adult caregiver of a child under 7 or of a household member with a disability, and other. Nationally, 13% of extremely low-income renter households are single adult caregivers, 53% of whom usually work more than 20 hours per week. Source: 2022 ACS PUMS.

AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE HOMES PER 100 RENTER HOUSEHOLDS



Source: HUD HC tabulations of 2022 ACS PUMS

HOUSING COST BURDEN BY INCOME GROUP



Note: Renter households spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs and utilities are cost burdened; those spending more than half of their income are severely cost burdened. Source: HUD HC tabulations of 2022 ACS PUMS.

Updated: 03/04/2024

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Note: *Or poverty guideline, if higher

Source: <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/03/27/rhode-island-has-a-major-shortage-of-housing-units-for-its-poorest-residents-gap-report/73080400007/>

ATTACHMENT B.

Issue Brief: Elderly Persons 65+ Experiencing Homelessness



Shelter Queue Referrals

Persons 65+	
Average time on queue before referral (Days)	Average time from referral to project start (Days)
16.6	0.5

General Population	
Average time on queue before referral (Days)	Average time from referral to project start (Days)
11.3	0.5

In Shelter

Persons 65+			
# with Housing Assessment	# of people in shelter now	Average length of stay in Shelter (Days)	% with a Housing Assessment
105	121	271	87%

General Population			
# with Housing Assessment	# of people in shelter now	Average length of stay in Shelter (Days)	% with a Housing Assessment
1085	1950	162	56%

Source: RHIS, Issue Brief Summary Dashboard

- Shelter Queue Outcomes: Last 365 Complete Days, dated 3/29/24
- SSLOS and HA: Last 365 Complete Days, dated 3/29/24