



May 20, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

The Senior Agenda Coalition of RI is pleased to support H5773, AN ACT RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- MEDICAL ASSISTANCE LONG-TERM CARE SERVICE AND FINANCE REFORM Introduced by Representatives Baginski and Casimiro.

The Senior Agenda Coalition of RI works to improve the quality of life of older Rhode Islanders and those who care for them. We do this through advocacy, community organizing and education. Our Coalition has a special focus on promoting home and community-based care and supporting family caregivers who often assist with such care. We successfully advocated to have the state set a goal of expending 50% of state funding for long term supports and services to go toward home and community-based care, helped end the wait list for respite services by advocating for additional state funding, worked to increase income limits for the state @Home Cost Share program that subsidizes home care and adult day service costs and to last year strongly supported the significant rate increases for home and community providers. While the state has made significant progress toward the 50% rebalancing goal, we still have a long way to go.

Created in 2010, the Shared Living program, a.k.a. Rite@Home Shared Living, is one of the state's three self-directed care programs and a valuable component of the state's home and community care service options offered under the Medicaid Program. It is providing care and support to about 500 eligible older persons and persons with disabilities and their families. The member lives in the home of their chosen family caregiver who is responsible for personal care, including assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), homemaker services, meals, transportation, being on call 24/7, providing socialization, and providing a home-like environment. The Shared Living provider provides the family member with education, coaching, emotional support and monitoring of the home environment through professional teams such as nurses and social workers. The program is cost-effective as the caregiver is paid a modest stipend as opposed to the average cost of care to Medicaid for persons in nursing facilities (\$73,506 for person 65+; \$84,548 for persons ages 18-64).

SACRI has learned there may be an effort by the state to change the parameters of the Shared Living program to prohibit caregivers who have a Power of Attorney for the care recipient from participating in the program. The program does not allow spouses or legally liable persons to serve as paid caregivers. However, other family members often serve as POA especially for those without family members or friends in their life who are willing or able to provide care and support allowing them to remain living in the community. Surveys show an overwhelming majority of persons with support needs wish to remain living at home and in community settings vs. institutional settings. SACRI supports this legislation as it opposes efforts that would serve to limit access to a full array of home and community-based services including Shared Living and accordingly supports this legislation.

Carol Anne Costa, Executive Director
Senior Agenda Coalition of RI (SACRI)