

April 13, 2026

House Finance Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Written Testimony in Support of House Resolution H8316 (MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$150,000 TO THE MAIN STREET RHODE ISLAND PROGRAM)

FROM: Caroline Stevens, Resident of Providence's Elmwood Neighborhood

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Rhode Island House Finance Committee:

Growing up in Washington, D.C., I lived within a short walk of two lively Main Streets. Those corridors weren't just places to shop; they were the heartbeat of my childhood—reliable "third places" where my community gathered, grew, and thrived.

Now that I'm raising my own family here in Rhode Island, providing that same experience for my children is my top priority. I want them to grow up in a walkable, vibrant community where their needs are met not by a car trip to a strip mall, but by a stroll down our local Main Street. In our case, that street is Elmwood Avenue in Providence, which offers little of interest to our family or that of our neighbors.

However, the Rhode Island Main Street program gives me hope. It empowers residents like me to move beyond being passive observers and become active participants in shaping the positive change our towns deserve. Thanks to ideas I got through Main Street RI's programming, this summer I'll be working with neighbors to activate a small park along Elmwood Avenue. Small ideas can lead eventually to big changes. Funding this program isn't just an investment in infrastructure; it's an investment in the social fabric and future of our families, and economic vitality of our communities.

I respectfully urge the House Finance Committee to approve the \$150,000 appropriation for Main Street Rhode Island in FY 2027.

Thank you for your consideration. I invite you to contact me should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

Caroline Stevens

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