

House Finance Committee

Feb. 26, 2026

RE: H7700 (RE: S2031) – Expanding eligibility for state Property Tax Relief Program

Dear Chair Abney and Members, House Finance Committee

My name is Wendy Oliver and I am a member of the Providence Village chapter of The Village Common of RI. The Village Common provides older Rhode Islanders with a community of mutual support to help us age in place. As a member of this organization for 10 years, I have benefitted in practical ways, as well as developing friendships and participating in numerous educational programs. I write in support of H7700 sponsored by Rep. Cotter (S2031 sponsored by Sen. Ujifusa). I believe this bill will provide real benefits to me and my community.

This bill increases eligibility for the state's Property Tax Relief program, sometimes known as the "Circuit Breaker" program. This program was created to bring property tax relief to lower and moderate-income older adults and people with disabilities. Increasing the income eligibility level will allow more of these individuals to take advantage of the law.

The cost of buying a home in RI has increased significantly over the past few years and rents in many areas of our state have risen dramatically. Most homeowners have seen increases in their property taxes as home values have gone up. These increasing costs have often been referred to as a "housing crisis."

One small way to assist in lowering housing costs for both renters and homeowners is to increase income eligibility for the state Property Tax program from \$40,730 to \$50,000 and to increase the maximum credit or refund from \$700 to \$850. Many older adults and people with disabilities rely mainly on Social Security for their income. The rising costs of housing takes up an increasing portion of the income of people on fixed incomes, and increases in Social Security do not keep pace with increases in the cost of living.

Please consider supporting H7700 (S2031) as one way to assist older adults like me and persons on Social Security disability in communities across the state to be better able to meet housing costs.

Sincerely,

Wendy Oliver
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