



February 11, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee, Chair  
House Committee on State Government and Elections  
State House, 82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
via email: [Rep-McEntee@rilegislature.gov](mailto:Rep-McEntee@rilegislature.gov)  
via email: [HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov)

RE: H-7488 – RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY – ABUSE IN HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Dear Chairwoman McEntee:

I write today regarding H-7488 – Relating to Healthy and Safety – Abuse in Healthcare Facilities, which would amend the definitions of “abuse” and “neglect” with regard to elder abuse investigated by the Office of Healthy Aging by deleting the element of willful conduct and deleting the definition of willful.

The Office of Healthy Aging delivers programs and services under the Older Americans Act (OAA), the primary federal law in the United States authorizing home and community-based services for adults aged 60 and older. The OAA supports independence, dignity, and aging-in-place through nutrition programs, transportation, caregiver support, and elder rights services. We write to share that the OAA defines “abuse” as the, “knowing infliction of physical or psychological harm or the knowing deprivation of goods or services that are necessary to meet essential needs or to avoid physical or psychological harm,” (42 U.S.C. § 3002(1)). If H-7488 is enacted, the Office of Healthy Aging must continue to apply the OAA standards of abuse and neglect when carrying out elder abuse investigations. Removing the word willful from current statute may cause confusion among older adults, family caregivers, public safety officials, and others.

Additionally, should H-7488 be enacted, Rhode Island criminal statute still maintains the requirement of intent when committing elder abuse or neglect; the proposed change in definition would complicate the ability to charge and prosecute such crimes.

As always, I thank you for your partnership and consideration of the concerns raised in this letter. Your leadership and advocacy for Rhode Island’s older adults, adults living with disabilities, and their families are appreciated.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria E. Cimini".

Maria E. Cimini  
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary  
The Honorable Brandon C. Potter  
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker of the House  
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy