

RE: HB 7377 State Building Code

To: Chairman Casey and members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee:

My name is Daniel Liparini, and I am writing in support of HB 7377.

This bill would require that certain new housing construction contain at least one floor that meets the requirements for ease of access – one zero-step entrance, doors with 32 inches of clear passage space and one bathroom on the main floor that would allow wheelchair access.

I believe we all know that RI has a very senior population, which is only going to grow. Estimates are that the 65+ population in the US is expected to account for 20% of the population by 2030 and Rhode Island will likely have an even higher percentage of seniors. If we want these seniors to remain in Rhode Island we need housing that reflects their needs. And this bill is one step towards that, for those who become mobility impaired.

But even beyond that, this meets the needs of the younger population that has mobility issues whether permanent or temporary. My youngest son had his legs severely injured in a car accident. After several weeks in the hospital and rehab facility we could bring him home, but he needed a wheelchair. Thank goodness the house we bought in 2000, had a garage ramp that allowed wheelchair access. (This had been put in place by the previous owner due to an elderly parent that lived with them.) Otherwise, we would have had to make changes to the house before bringing him home, which would have extended his time in the rehab facility.

Incorporating the changes proposed by this bill is much less expensive to do while building a house than they are to do after the house is built.

Please support this commonsense approach to make Rhode Island a place where seniors enjoy living.

Sincerely,

Daniel Liparini

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