



February 21, 2025

Honorable Stephen Casey
Chairperson, House Committee on Municipal Government & Housing
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 5269 – AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION – LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES

Dear Chairman Casey and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Society of CPAs (RISCPA), I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of H 5269, which would grant municipalities the discretion to waive interest on overdue taxes for commercial properties under specific conditions.

As the leading voice of the CPA profession in Rhode Island, RISCPA represents financial and tax professionals who advise businesses across all industries. Our members witness firsthand the financial challenges Rhode Island businesses face—particularly small and mid-sized companies struggling with rising costs, economic uncertainty, and unforeseen disruptions.

H 5269, which is also supported by the Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance—where I serve as Chairman—and the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, provides a common-sense solution to help businesses navigate temporary financial hardships. Unexpected events such as economic downturns, supply chain disruptions, public health crises, or natural disasters can severely impact a company's ability to meet tax obligations. In these instances, excessive interest penalties can accelerate financial distress, leading to closures, job losses, and long-term economic setbacks.

This legislation ensures that municipalities have the flexibility to assess situations on a case-by-case basis, allowing them to offer relief where justified while still maintaining control over local revenue collection. As Rhode Island competes with neighboring states for business retention and investment, enacting policies that promote economic resilience is critical to strengthening our long-term competitiveness.

Importantly, H 5269 does not eliminate tax obligations but instead acknowledges that providing businesses with temporary relief from compounding interest penalties can help them recover,

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sustain operations, and continue contributing to the local economy. This approach supports both businesses and municipalities by fostering a healthier, more stable economic environment. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support H 5269 and its role in promoting a stronger and more competitive Rhode Island. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Melissa Travis
President/CEO
RI Society of CPAs/RI Business Forum