



February 27, 2025

Dear Chairman Casey,
Members, House Municipal Government & Housing Committee

Re: H5308

The Senior Agenda Coalition of RI (SACRI) supports H5308, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES sponsored by Representatives Voas, Giraldo, Messier, Stewart, Slater, Casey, Finkelman, Marszalkowski, Solomon

SACRI's mission is to mobilize people to implement an agenda that improves the quality of life of older Rhode Islanders and adults with disabilities. We accomplish this through *community organizing, public education, advocacy, and legislative action*. Addressing affordability and accessibility of housing is a priority for SACRI.

Homestead Exemptions are one way of providing relief from property taxes by exempting all or part of a home's value. A number of Rhode Island municipalities provide for some type of property tax exemption tied to certain criteria as age, disability and income. This bill authorizes every municipality in the state to enact ordinances to annually fix the amount, if any, of a homestead tax exemption of up to 20% of assessed value to the owners of residential properties with up to four units. It further allows municipalities that have a different or higher exemption are exempted from any limitations provided in this new section of the law.

Property taxes are often the largest tax expense paid by lower-income older adults. Census data shows that 34% of older homeowners in R.I. are housing cost burdened paying more than 30% of their income on housing related costs. Property tax exemptions can help to offset this burden. As housing prices have risen so dramatically in the last several years allowing municipalities to annually fix the amount of the homestead exemption will allow local officials to make changes in response to both the housing market and the municipal budget planning process.

Thank you for your consideration of SACRI's support for this legislation.