



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

February 27, 2025

Representative Steve Casey
Chair, House Municipal Government Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Casey, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 5512, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION – PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION. If enacted, this bill would exempt from taxation the real and tangible personal property of Project Weber/RENEW (PWR).

Project Weber/RENEW is a harm reduction and recovery support organization that offers essential services across the entire spectrum of substance use care, reaching some of our city's most vulnerable residents. As the first municipality in Rhode Island to authorize the operation of a Harm Reduction Center, Providence understands firsthand the profound positive impact these centers have had in cities around the world. These centers not only prevent overdoses through supervised consumption, but they also serve as critical access points for healthcare services, basic needs, and recovery resources.

In 2023 alone, PWR served over 6,000 individuals by providing essential services such as harm reduction, HIV/Hep-C navigation, peer support, case management, and LGBTQIA+ support services. This new location in Providence has enabled PWR to expand its reach by operating the first-ever state sanctioned overdose prevention center. It has also increased capacity for the drop-in center, offering key services like showers and laundry facilities, which are crucial for individuals in need.

PWR's judgment-free approach to services empowers the City's most vulnerable populations to make healthier, safer choices. For these reasons, as well as the ones outlined above, I urge the committee to approve House Bill 5512.

Sincerely,


Brett P Smiley,
Mayor