



March 4, 2025

The Honorable Stephen Casey
Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives

RE: *H 5306 – “An Act Relating to Special Development District Commission – Capital Center Commission”*

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of The Providence Foundation, I am writing to express our members’ staunch support for H 5306 and policies that promote an efficient and predictable development process. H 5306 seeks to dissolve the Capital Center Commission, ensuring a consistent regulatory framework for Downtown Providence while reducing developer risk and streamlining expectations.

For the past 50 years, The Providence Foundation has championed bold, visionary land use changes that have reshaped Downtown Providence. From relocating rivers and highways to activating new public spaces, we have worked collaboratively to make Downtown a vibrant destination for residents, businesses, and visitors. This commitment led to the establishment of the Capital Center Special Development District in accordance with enabling Rhode Island General Law 45-24.4.¹

The Capital Center Special Development District was created to promote development in accordance with Rhode Island Public Law, guiding the design and regulatory process for 79 newly designated parcels near the State House.² Over the years, the Commission has reviewed major projects such as Waterplace Towers, Avalon at Center Place, and Providence Place to name a few.

Today, however, its role primarily involves reviewing design elements like lighting and signage—functions that overlap with those of the Downtown Design Review Commission. While The Providence Foundation values thoughtful design oversight, requiring developers to go through two separate commissions for approvals creates unnecessary duplication

¹ Rhode Island General Law. <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/Statutes/TITLE45/45-24.4/INDEX.htm>

² Public law 019. (n.d.-b). <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/PublicLaws94/law94019.htm>

and added costs. We believe consolidating this process under a single regulatory body will enhance efficiency and maintain high design standards, benefiting both developers and the broader Providence community.

For these reasons, The Providence Foundation urges passage of H 5306.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David A. Salvatore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Salvatore
Executive Director
The Providence Foundation