

To: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

Date: March 11, 2025

Re: Support For H-5797 Defining A “Co-Living” Zoning Ordinance Provision

From: Bernie Beaudreau, Rumford, RI 401-440-4165 bernardjbeaudreau@gmail.com

Out of concern about the lack of affordable and available rental housing for low-income and homeless individuals, I support passage of H-5797 which would define a co-living zoning ordinance provision which would allow for shared kitchen, bathroom and living room space and separate bedrooms for multiple tenants. This measure will hopefully provide more housing options for low-income tenants in a very tight and expensive rental housing market.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Annual Homeless Assessment Reports, homelessness in Rhode Island has more than doubled in the last five years, from 1,104 in 2020 to 2,442 individuals in 2024. The number of unsheltered homeless has grown five times, from 108 in 2020 to 534 in 2024. The current estimate of unsheltered homeless in Rhode Island is 673 individuals representing a 26% increase in just the past 12 months.

Addressing the housing supply needs of low-income and homeless Rhode Island is going to take a combination of regulatory measures like this proposed co-living legislation and much greater financial investment on the part of state government to create affordable housing units and emergency shelters for the growing homeless population.