

Dawn Huntley

From: Tougas, Michelle <mtougas@accesspointri.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 9, 2025 11:27 AM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Subject: Support House Bill 5268

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Dear House Municipal Government and Housing Committee Members,

My name is Michelle Tougas. I have been supporting people with disabilities at AccessPoint RI for 38 years. I'm writing to urge you to pass House Bill 5268 and Senate Bill 714 which will require all new housing in Rhode Island to be accessible.

Without accessible housing, individuals with disabilities are often denied the right to choose where and how they live. While those without disabilities have a variety of housing options, people with disabilities often have very few. The same should be true for everyone.

I once coordinated services for a middle-aged man who was a wheelchair user. After living in a group home for over twenty-six years, he wanted to move into a shared living arrangement to gain more independence. Unfortunately, a lack of accessible housing made that goal nearly impossible. It was a disheartening experience that reinforced how critical accessible housing is for inclusion and autonomy.

Everyone deserves the dignity of choice and the opportunity to live in a home that meets their needs and supports their goals. Accessible housing should not be a luxury- it should be the standard.

Please pass HB 5268 and SB 714 to ensure that all new housing in Rhode Island is accessible. Let's give people with disabilities the same freedom and dignity to choose where they live, just like everyone else.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle Tougas

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