



*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE BILL 7448 – RELATING TO TAXATION -- LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we respectfully submit this testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 7448, which would impose a 20% cap on increases in consecutive revaluations of real property in all cities and towns beginning December 31, 2026.

We stand with our affiliate members in the Rhode Island Association of Assessing Officers (RIAAO) and share their concerns regarding the significant negative impact this legislation would have on municipalities. By limiting the percentage increase in property assessments, House Bill 7448 distorts the principles of fair and equitable taxation and shifts the tax burden unfairly among property owners.

If property values in a community rise due to market growth, a cap on assessment increases means that only a portion of that growth would be subject to taxation. Consequently, property owners whose homes appreciate beyond the capped threshold would pay taxes on only part of their actual value, while owners of properties with little or no appreciation, or even depreciation, would bear a disproportionate share of the tax burden. This creates an inequitable system in which those experiencing market-driven increases in net worth pay less than their fair share, while those whose properties decline in value may face higher taxes despite a loss in personal wealth.

Moreover, increases in assessed value do not necessarily reflect a property owner's ability to pay. A homeowner whose property value rises significantly does not automatically have higher income or greater financial resources, just as a homeowner experiencing declining property values may struggle to meet mortgage obligations. In cases where a property loses value, the owner may be unable to refinance due to being underwater on their mortgage, further compounding financial hardship. This imbalance can have severe unintended consequences, potentially increasing foreclosure and undermining economic stability in our communities.

Given these concerns, we urge the committee to reject House Bill 7448. This legislation would fundamentally alter Rhode Island's property tax system in a way that is unfair, administratively complex, and detrimental to municipal finances. We encourage continued dialogue with municipal leaders and assessing professionals to ensure property tax policies remain fair, equitable, and reflective of market conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the perspective of Rhode Island's municipalities and for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Rossi", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Municipal Government and Housing