



March 16, 2026

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee

On behalf of the Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL), I am writing in support of House Bill H7564, which would increase the availability of accessible housing in Rhode Island.

Since 1988, OSCIL has worked to remove the physical and attitudinal barriers that prevent Rhode Islanders with disabilities from fully participating in their communities. One of the most significant barriers our consumers face is the lack of accessible and affordable housing. Accessible units are extremely limited, and individuals with disabilities often remain in nursing facilities, inaccessible homes, or unstable housing situations because suitable housing options are unavailable.

H7564 is an important step toward addressing this challenge by requiring that publicly funded housing developments with four or more units include accessible design standards. Specifically, the bill requires that 10% of units meet Type A accessibility standards and 25% meet Type B accessibility standards as outlined by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). These standards help ensure that housing can meet the needs of individuals with disabilities both now and in the future. Accessible housing benefits not only people with disabilities, but also older adults, families, and individuals who may experience temporary or permanent mobility limitations. With projections indicating that by 2030 nearly one in four Rhode Islanders will be over the age of 65, it is both practical and fiscally responsible to ensure that housing is built with accessibility in mind from the start.

Building housing that is accessible from the beginning is far more cost-effective than retrofitting units later, and it supports Rhode Islanders in remaining independent in their homes and communities.

For these reasons, OSCIL respectfully urges the committee to support and pass H7564.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

*Beth Pinkham*

Beth Pinkham, Associate Director