

Testimony

Good evening, Chairperson and members of the committee,

My name is **Dr. Isaac Mawuko Adusu**, and I serve as the **Assistant Vice President of Adult Services at Seven Hills Rhode Island**. Every day, I support adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are striving to live full, independent lives in our communities.

I am here today to speak about something very simple but deeply human: **access**.

In my work, I see firsthand how the design of our homes and public spaces determines whether someone with a disability can participate in life or be excluded from it. In an article I wrote, recently, titled "*The Power of Access: How Inclusive Design Empowers People with Disabilities and Their Caregivers*," I describe how accessibility is not just a design choice, it is a matter of **dignity, independence, and inclusion**.

Unfortunately, the reality for many of the people I support is very different.

On multiple occasions, individuals we support have arrived at community event centers, restaurants, or housing sites excited to participate, only to discover **stairs instead of ramps, narrow doorways instead of accessible entrances, or bathrooms they cannot safely use**. When that happens, they often have no choice but to **turn around and go home**.

I have personally witnessed this happen **more times than I can count**, and every time it happens, it chips away at a person's sense of belonging. Imagine preparing for an outing, getting excited about being part of your community, and then realizing the world was simply **not built for you**.

Accessible housing and inclusive design can change that.

I respectfully urge the committee to support HB 7564 that ensure Rhode Island builds housing that is **accessible, adaptable, and inclusive for everyone**.

Because access is not a luxury. **Access is dignity**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.