



March 17, 2026

The Honorable Stephen Casey, Chair
House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence RI 02903

Re: Support for H8040

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) and our alliance of members and partners serving low-income Rhode Islanders, I write to express our support for H8040, legislation that would prevent municipalities from treating the development of housing for people in recovery differently than any other residential development.

Rhode Island faces a well-documented and persistent shortage of affordable homes. The National Low Income Housing Coalition, of which we are a state partner, recently released its annual report, *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*, which found that Rhode Island has a shortage of 23,222 rental homes that are affordable and available to the lowest-income renters. Addressing this challenge will require coordinated action across all levels of government, as well as strong partnerships between municipalities, housing developers, community-based organizations, and the private sector.

For many Rhode Islanders working to rebuild their lives in recovery, stable housing is not simply a benefit—it is a critical foundation for long-term health and stability. Individuals who are navigating recovery from substance use disorder often face significant barriers when seeking housing, particularly if they also have experiences with the criminal legal system, mental or behavioral health challenges, or other hardships. These barriers can make it extraordinarily difficult to secure safe and appropriate housing, increasing the risk of housing instability or homelessness.

H8040 helps ensure that organizations providing recovery support services can develop the housing needed to support individuals on their path to recovery without facing additional local barriers rooted in stigma or misunderstanding. By treating recovery housing like any other residential development, this legislation affirms the dignity of people in recovery and recognizes that stable housing is one of the most effective tools we have to support sustained recovery and community reintegration.

Rhode Island's housing shortage affects households across all income levels, but it is felt most acutely by low- and moderate-income residents, renters, older adults, and others who already face systemic barriers to housing stability. We appreciate the Committee's leadership over the past several years in advancing thoughtful legislation that makes the creation of homes more efficient, more accessible, and more abundant. H8040 is another important piece of the puzzle in ensuring that safe, stable housing—and the opportunity it provides—is truly available to all Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have and can be reached at 401-721-5680 ext. 104 or mlodge@housingnetworkri.org.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melina Lodge".

Melina Lodge, Executive Director