



*Distinctive Communities  
Powerful Alliance*

March 17, 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 8040– AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we write to express concern regarding House Bill 8040, which would prohibit municipalities from enacting zoning ordinances that place restrictions on residential recovery houses that are not applicable to other residential homes.

Municipal leaders across Rhode Island recognize the seriousness of the substance use disorder crisis and appreciate the intent behind this legislation. Recovery housing can play an important role in supporting individuals on the path to recovery and strengthening communities. Cities and towns remain committed to being partners in addressing addiction and supporting recovery resources throughout the state.

However, municipalities also have an obligation to ensure that local zoning and land-use policies appropriately balance neighborhood compatibility, public safety, and the unique circumstances of each community. As drafted, the bill could significantly limit the ability of local governments to address site-specific considerations or adopt reasonable standards that help ensure recovery housing operates safely and effectively within residential neighborhoods.

Local officials, including planning and zoning boards, building officials, and public safety departments, often work closely with operators and residents to address practical issues such as occupancy, safety compliance, neighborhood impacts, and coordination with local services. Municipalities are concerned that the broad prohibition contained in the bill could unintentionally remove important tools needed to manage these considerations in a responsible and collaborative manner.

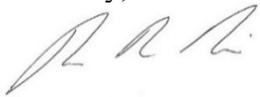
The League appreciates the goal of expanding recovery opportunities and supporting individuals in recovery. We respectfully suggest that the legislation could be strengthened through the inclusion of a statewide certification or registration program for recovery residences, potentially administered through the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, along with basic health and safety standards and coordination with municipal officials. Many states have adopted similar frameworks to ensure recovery housing operates under consistent standards while also protecting residents and surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, the adoption of nationally recognized recovery housing standards, such as those developed by the National Alliance for Recovery Residences, could help provide clear operational guidance for recovery residence operators.

The League also encourages continued dialogue with municipalities as this legislation is considered in its present form. Cities and towns bring important practical experience related to land use, building safety, and neighborhood planning, and their input can help ensure that any statewide policy appropriately reflects the diverse needs and circumstances of Rhode Island's communities.

The Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns stand ready to work with the General Assembly, state agencies, advocates, and other stakeholders to find a balanced approach that supports recovery housing while preserving the ability of municipalities to address their unique local circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. R. Rossi', written in a cursive style.

Randy R. Rossi  
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Municipal Government and Housing