



Testimony of Matthew Netto, AARP Rhode Island  
**In support of House Bill 7445**  
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee  
March 31st, 2026

Chairman Casey and members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee,

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with 38 million members nationwide and nearly 125,000 members here in Rhode Island. We advocate on behalf of issues that impact older adults, and we appreciate the opportunity to offer our support for Representative Speakman's House Bill 7445.

House Bill 7445 is legislation that would increase the housing supply by allowing faith-based organizations to develop affordable and mixed-use housing on the land they own.

Rhode Island is facing a severe housing affordability and availability crisis, and older adults are among those most affected. Many older residents live on fixed or limited incomes and are struggling with rising rents, property taxes, insurance costs, and utility expenses. As housing costs increase, too many older adults are forced to make difficult choices or leave communities where they have lived for decades. Expanding a wider range of lower-cost housing options is essential to ensuring older Rhode Islanders can remain housed safely and with dignity in the community of their choosing.

By encouraging the thoughtful use of underutilized land owned or controlled by faith-based organizations, H7445 creates an important opportunity to expand the supply of housing in a manner that aligns with the needs of older adults. These properties are frequently located in established residential areas and are well-suited for smaller-scale, community-oriented housing developments. Increasing housing availability in these locations can support affordability, accessibility, and stability for older residents living on fixed or limited incomes.

We strongly support House Bill 7445 because it expands housing opportunities that directly impact older adults and helps address Rhode Island's critical shortage of housing in a creative way. Increased supply will allow older adults to age in place with dignity, stability, and within the neighborhoods they know and trust.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt R. Netto".

Matthew Netto  
Associate State Director-AARP Rhode Island