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Thank you to the House Committee on Municipal Government & Housing for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Vincent W. DeSimone, and I live in Lincoln Mobile Estates Housing Cooperative in Lincoln Rhode Island, which is a resident-owned community.

I have lived all my life in Rhode Island except for during my military service in the United States Army. As I reached my retirement age of 70, I started looking for an affordable home to stay here in Rhode Island. I found and purchased my home in 2013. This was one of the only paths to homeownership that made financial sense for me for my retirement planning.

When I moved in to my home, I found that there was already a Resident Group toying with the idea of purchasing the park we lived in. It was a big process over a number of years taking organizing, meetings, and a lot of people coming together to make it happen.

We were fortunate to purchase the Park from the former owner in July of 2019.

Living in a resident-owned community does take work. We attend meetings, make decisions together, and take responsibility for the place we live. It's not passive, but that effort is worth it. Because of resident ownership, I have stable and affordable housing. We don't have an outside landlord raising rents to generate profit. We have a say in the decisions that affect our community, and most importantly, we don't have to worry about the land being sold out from under us.

We've also undertaken real improvements in our community. Currently we are working to improve our waste water system by connecting to the Town of Lincoln sewer system. These investments happen because we live there and they matter to us.

Resident ownership works. It creates stability, preserves affordability, and gives people like me a real chance at long-term housing security. This bill is important because it would give more residents in Rhode Island the opportunity to become resident-owned. Right now, too many communities never even get a fair chance to try.

I urge you to support this bill so more Rhode Islanders can have the same stability and opportunity that I do. Thank you for your time and consideration.