



March 30, 2026

The Honorable Representative Stephen Casey, Chair  
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence RI 02903

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 8142  
AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT –  
RESIDENTIAL REUSE INVENTIVE ACT**

Chair Casey and Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee:

On behalf of United Way Rhode Island, we strongly support H 8142, which creates a state program and fund to finance adaptive reuse and mixed-use housing projects, requires affordable units and labor standards, and provides oversight to expand housing until 2035. United Way's policy and advocacy efforts follow our strategic framework: **Strong Families, Strong Nonprofits, Strong United Way**. We prioritize policies that strengthen household stability, expand access to opportunity, and ensure public investments deliver measurable value.

Housing support is the most frequent need presented by Rhode Islanders calling or visiting 211, United Way Rhode Island's human services helpline. In 2025, 17,235 Rhode Islanders called for housing help, making up 35% of that year's calls, and so far in 2026, 38% of the callers have expressed housing needs. Housing preservation and production is the sustainable solution to the housing shortage that's exacerbated the existing affordability challenges in Rhode Island. Targeted state investment, like the housing bond we voted for in 2024, increase housing stock and support communities. As the law has changed to allow multi-family and mixed-use developments, the state has seen moderate interest from intra-state developers.

House Bill 8142 directs a funding stream for these specifically affordable housing units, expanding on early successes in development tied to state initiatives. The state has taken actions to incentivize development from many angles, and this bill furthers these efforts by financially backing the projects that are proven to reduce housing costs for Rhode Islanders. Setting labor, wage, and apprenticeship standards for larger projects aligns with UWRI's workforce development goals.

United Way Rhode Island respectfully urges your support for House Bill 8039 and thanks you for sharing our commitment to changing our law so neighborhoods can welcome more **Strong Families**.

Sincerely,  
Peggy Afonso, Program Officer, Housing and Economic Policy  
United Way Rhode Island