



April 27, 2026
Representative Stephen Casey, Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence RI 02903

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 7774
AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY – STATE BUILDING CODE**

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

On behalf of United Way Rhode Island, we strongly support H 7774, which amends the state building code and would adopt the 2024 International Residential Code and prohibit the state building committee from adopting amendments for one to four residential dwelling units until 2030. 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 stability is central to United Way Rhode Island's Strong Families principle. Education outcomes, economic opportunity, and health determinants are compromised by housing instability, which perpetuates a cycle of poverty that can impact a family for generations. 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 support often comes in the form of rental assistance, but need for utility assistance is rising across the state. As Rhode Island seeks to end the housing crisis, it is imperative that the residential units we construct are homes we can pay to heat and cool.

Adopting the International Energy Conservation Code as stated in House Bill 7774 provides clear, specific requirements for the building envelope that residential developers can rely on for unified regulation across municipalities. Predictability in compliance measures supports on-budget developments that can pass on energy savings to the resident. United Way Rhode Island is committed to supporting the development of residential units that fit where they are built, so Rhode Island families can live afford in the neighborhoods they grew up in.

United Way Rhode Island respectfully urges your support for Senate Bill 2632 and thanks you for sharing our commitment to building code that helps affordably housing **Strong Families**.

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