

**To:** House Municipal Government and Housing Committee Clerk

**From:** Arthur A. Yatsko

**Date:** April 21, 2026

**Subject:** SUPPORT for 2026-H 8006 - Relating to Towns and Cities - Single-Stair Housing

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for **H 8006**, which would allow for the construction of up to four-story multifamily buildings with a single exit stairway. This common-sense building code reform is a vital tool for addressing Rhode Island's housing crisis by unlocking the "missing middle" of housing production.

This legislation aligns Rhode Island with modern international standards and successful U.S. models in Seattle and New York City. Based on testimony from other states that have recently adopted similar measures, I urge you to consider the following benefits:

- **Increased Affordability:** Single-stair designs can reduce construction costs by up to **13%**. By eliminating the "double-loaded corridor" requirement, developers can build on smaller, irregular infill lots that are currently financially unfeasible.
- **Family-Sized Housing:** In states like Colorado noted that single-stair buildings allow for "point access" designs where apartments can have windows on multiple sides. This facilitates cross-ventilation, natural light, and the creation of larger, 3- and 4-bedroom units suitable for families, rather than just small studios.
- **Neighborhood Character:** This bill promotes "gentle density" that blends into existing Rhode Island neighborhoods. It allows local, small-scale developers to build 6- to 12-unit buildings on single lots, rather than requiring massive "superblock" developments that often face community opposition.
- **Proven Fire Safety:** Modern single-stair buildings are not "less safe." Analysis of decades of fire data in Seattle and NYC shows these buildings—when equipped with modern fire-resistant materials—have safety records equal to or better than traditional two-stair buildings.

H 8006 is a low-cost, high-impact reform that will help provide the diverse, livable, and affordable housing Rhode Islanders desperately need. I respectfully request that you recommend this bill for passage.

Sincerely,

Arthur A. Yatsko

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