



February 10, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chair, House Committee on State Government and Elections
State House, 82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
via email: Rep-Shanley@rilegislature.gov
via email: HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov

RE: H-7496 – RELATING TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY – JCLS

Dear Chairman Shanley:

I write today in support of H-7496 – Relating to the General Assembly – Joint Committee on Legislative Services. The Office of Healthy Aging is charged with advocating for Rhode Island’s older adults and adults living with disabilities, ensuring they can live fulfilling lives in the communities of their choosing. This legislation would update the language used when describing older adults and adults living with disabilities. Terms like senior, elderly, handicapped, and similar terms evoke negative stereotypes of older adults, which can lead to bias against older adults, and poor outcomes for older adults. Eliminating age bias from written language, including in our general laws, promotes a respectful, positive attitude toward older people and aging while still being descriptive and accurate. Using respectful and inclusive language, and avoiding words that reflect implicit biases, can help counter the negative stigma associated with aging. Together we can ensure our state remains a place that values and promotes the contributions of all citizens, regardless of age or disability.

As always, I thank you for your partnership and consideration of this letter, and I urge the committee to support this bill. Your leadership and advocacy for Rhode Island’s older adults, adults living with disabilities, and their families are appreciated.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria E. Cimini".

Maria E. Cimini
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
The Honorable Lauren H. Carson
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy