



March 19, 2026

House Committee on Health and Human Services
Rhode Island State House
househealthandhumanservices@rilegislature.gov

Re: **Testimony regarding HB 7928**, to support the formation of resident and family councils in assisted living facilities in RI

Dear Chair Donovan and Honorable Committee Members,

ABC-RI drafted the bill from which HB 7928 is derived. Our mission is to protect the rights and interests of all Rhode Islanders in long-term care, and these amendments reflect that mission:

1. The bill as written establishes a right to form councils without any mechanism to ensure residents and care-partners are made aware of it. **A right that residents don't know they have is no right at all.** RI nursing home statute [§ 23-17.5-30. Family councils](#) provides, and this bill should also include:
 - a. **(d) Upon the admission of a resident, the nursing facility shall inform the resident and the resident's family members, in writing, of their right to form a family [and resident] council, or if a family [or resident] council already exists, of the date, time and location of scheduled meetings.**
2. The bill as written provides **no way for families to connect with each other or to learn of council meetings** other than a posting in the facility. This discriminates against long-distance care-partners, and such postings often go unnoticed even by regular visitors. Other states' statute provides, and this bill should also include, for example:
 - a. **The facility shall provide the resident and those family members, friends, and resident representatives with the name and contact information of the family council representative, as designated by the family council, in writing, prior to or within five business days after the resident's admission or the resident's representative, family member, or other individual is designated or identified. When family council meeting information is provided by the family council, the facility shall include notice of family council meetings in routine mailings to those family members, friends, and resident representatives.**
 - b. (3) Upon request, and with the permission of the family council, the facility shall share the name and contact information of the designated representative of the family council with the long-term care ombudsman program.
 - (h)(1) **A facility shall provide the family council with the names, email addresses, and other contact information for each resident's representatives, family members, or other individuals designated by the resident if the person has provided written consent specifying the contact information that may be shared with the family council.**

(2) The facility must inform the identified family members, friends, and representatives of their right to have their contact information shared with the family council and their right to consent or withhold consent to have their contact information shared with the family council pursuant to paragraph (1). ([CA HSC 1569.158](#))

3. The bill as written provides thirty (30) business days—**six weeks**—or a facility to respond to written resident council communication, which undermines the collaborative problem-solving that councils are designed to foster. Residents should not have to wait longer for a response from their own facility than they would from the Department of Health or the Ombudsman. Other states set this window at five (5) business days to fourteen (14) calendar days. **Ten (10) business days, or fourteen (14) calendar days, is ample time for facility administrators to respond,** and we urge the committee to adopt that standard.
4. The title of the bill refers to “managed residential communities providing assisted living services,” where it should say “assisted living residences.”

Rhode Island's approximately 4,500 assisted living residents are better protected when they can organize and advocate collectively through independent resident and family councils. Yet very few Rhode Island assisted living residences currently have such councils — and that is no accident. Administrators understand that an organized, independent council is a meaningful check on facility practices, and that accountability is not always welcome. The evidence is clear, however: where independent councils exist, residents experience measurable improvements in safety, dignity, and quality of life. That outcome should be the shared priority of every stakeholder. We urge you to adopt the above amendments and give Rhode Island's most vulnerable residents the organizational tools they deserve.

Thank you for your time and attention, and for all of your work on behalf of all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Gerard,
ABC-RI

Scan here or go to <https://bit.ly/alfij> for spreadsheet of RI ALF deficiencies/survey reports from publicly available RIDOH data.

