



March 18, 2026

The Honorable Chairwoman Susan Donovan  
House Health and Human Services Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H7928 - Opposed

Chairwoman Donovan and Honorable members of the committee:

On behalf of LeadingAge Connecticut & Rhode Island, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding House Bill 7928.

We appreciate the intent of this bill and support the concept of resident and family councils within assisted living communities. We are particularly encouraged that the bill recognizes that the formation and ongoing operation of such councils should be driven by interested residents and family members.

However, we do have concerns regarding the provisions related to family councils as currently drafted.

Assisted living residents are, in most cases, independent adults who should retain autonomy over decisions involving their personal lives, including whether family members participate in councils that may discuss community matters. As written, the bill establishes an "opt-out" framework, requiring residents to object to their family member's participation.

We believe a more appropriate approach would be an "opt-in" model, ensuring that residents affirmatively consent to such participation. This would better respect resident autonomy and privacy.

We also recognize that for residents living in dementia special care units, a different standard may be appropriate. In those cases, family participation without explicit resident consent may be necessary and appropriate.

Accordingly, we respectfully suggest the following language:

*“Such family council shall not allow a family member or friend of a resident who is not a resident of a dementia special care unit to participate in the family council without the consent of such resident.”*

We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee to refine this language and ensure the bill achieves its intended purpose while respecting resident rights.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mag Morelli

President