

RIALA  
2253 Pawtucket Ave,  
East Providence, RI 02914



[March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026](#)

[The Honorable Susan Donovan](#)  
[Chair, House Health & Human Services Committee](#)  
[State House](#)  
[82 Smith Street](#)  
[Providence, RI 02903](#)

[RE: Opposition to H7929, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, House Health & Human Services Hearing](#)

[Dear Chairwoman Donovan:](#)

On behalf of Rhode Island's assisted living communities, I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to this legislation.

Assisted living communities in Rhode Island operate under residential agreements similar to other housing models. Today, our state's assisted living residences employ over 1,700 Rhode islanders and house more than 5,500 Rhode Island seniors. Statewide occupancy levels remain above 90 percent, meaning the vast majority of units are filled at any given time. At the same time, Rhode Island, one of the oldest states in the nation by median age, is experiencing a rapidly growing senior demographic. Demand for senior housing is projected to increase substantially in the coming decades as the baby boomer generation ages.

Currently, Rhode Island has the infrastructure to house approximately 6.6% of adults over the age of 75 in assisted living settings. Within the next ten years, due to projected population growth in this age range, that capacity ratio is expected to decline to closer to 1.3% if additional development does not occur. We need thoughtful industry growth in this state, not additional regulatory burdens that may discourage expansion and investment at a time when demand is accelerating.

In this environment of high occupancy and growing demand, financial predictability and operational stability are essential to maintaining access to care and housing.

This bill would prohibit enforcement of a 30-day notice provision in the event of a resident's death and would limit rent collection to no more than seven days, regardless of operational realities. It would also require communities to arrange for storage of personal belongings if they are not removed within seven days.

Respectfully, this creates several serious concerns.

First, assisted living is primarily a private-pay residential housing model, not a state-subsidized reimbursement system. Unlike nursing facilities that receive Medicaid per diem payments, assisted living communities rely on contractual monthly rental revenue to cover fixed operating costs, including staffing, utilities, food, insurance, mortgage obligations, and regulatory compliance. These costs do not pause when a resident passes away.

The 30-day notice provision is not punitive; it is a standard housing mechanism that provides stability and predictability. Eliminating it shifts all vacancy risk to the provider. If a family takes 20 days to clear a unit, which is entirely understandable during a period of grief, the community would be required to absorb the financial loss for that time. With occupancy already above 90 percent statewide, margins are tight, and unexpected unrecoverable vacancies directly impact staffing and service delivery.

Second, the bill requires providers to arrange for storage of personal property after seven days. Assisted living communities are not in the storage business. This requirement raises important liability concerns:

- Who assumes responsibility for damaged, lost, or disputed belongings?
- What standards of inventory, transport, and insurance apply?
- What additional costs will be incurred, and who bears them?

Mandating storage services introduces new legal exposure and insurance implications unrelated to the core mission of providing housing and supportive services.

Third, the existing 30-day structure often works in families' favor. It allows loved ones the necessary time to grieve, make funeral arrangements, and thoughtfully clear personal belongings without being rushed. If rent collection is cut off after seven days, communities may face pressure to either absorb significant financial losses or urge families to clear units more quickly than is compassionate or practical. That is not a position we believe this legislature intends to create.

Additionally, if a new resident is ready to move in while furniture remains in a unit, the provider is placed in an untenable position: either delay admission and deny housing to another Rhode Island senior in need or absorb vacancy losses while managing property storage logistics.

Finally, we must consider the broader policy impact. Rhode Island urgently needs to expand, not discourage, senior housing capacity. As demand grows exponentially over the next decade, adding operational burdens and financial uncertainty risks deterring new development and investment in assisted living within our state. In a high-cost regulatory environment, policies that undermine revenue predictability may unintentionally force smaller communities to close or discourage providers from entering the Rhode Island market, outcomes we simply cannot afford.

We fully appreciate the intent behind this legislation and remain committed to working with policymakers on solutions that support families during difficult times. However, this proposal, as written, creates unnecessary operational and legal burdens while threatening housing stability for thousands of Rhode Island seniors.

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We respectfully urge the Committee to reconsider this approach and to work collaboratively with stakeholders to find a balanced solution that protects families without destabilizing the assisted living infrastructure our state depends upon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.