



westbay community action

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Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 8402 (H8402)

Submitted by Paul Salera

President & CEO, Westbay Community Action

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Paul Salera, President and CEO of Westbay Community Action. I am here in strong support of House Bill 8402, which establishes a permanent Aging Commission to guide and sustain a coordinated, multi-sector plan for aging in Rhode Island.

Every day, we serve older adults who are navigating not just one challenge, but many. Housing, healthcare, transportation, food access, and financial stability are all interconnected. These systems are designed to support them operate in silos rather in a coordinated manner.

H8402 is a critical step forward because it creates the structure needed to bring these systems together. A permanent Aging Commission ensures that coordination is not temporary or fragmented but will be sustained, accountable, and forward-looking.

This Commission will:

- Drive cross-agency collaboration across health, housing, transportation, and economic development
- Establish clear benchmarks and accountability measures
- Promote data-driven decision-making through transparent reporting
- Align Rhode Island with federal aging initiatives and funding opportunities

Most importantly, it ensures that we are planning not just for today but for the future. Rhode Island's aging population is growing, and without a coordinated strategy, we risk inefficiencies, gaps in service, and missed opportunities to support independence and quality of life.

At Westbay we believe that a permanent, multi-sector approach will make a real difference:

- Older adults will experience more seamless, accessible services
- Families and caregivers will have a clearer path to support
- The state will use resources more efficiently and strategically

This is about building a system that works better for everyone.

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I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 8402 and establish a permanent Aging Commission that will ensure Rhode Island is prepared, coordinated, and accountable in meeting the needs of our older adults.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Salera

President & CEO
Westbay Community Action