

March 11, 2026

Special Legislative Commission to Study Housing Affordability

Dear Members of the Commission:

For your consideration, I submit the following testimony for the Commission's meeting on housing affordability this Thursday.

Regarding the first presentation on the Commission's agenda — Update on Services Available to RI's Homeless Population — I would like to draw your attention to an open letter addressed to Governor McKee on behalf of the Rhode Island Housing First Coalition and published in *RI News Today*.¹ The letter addresses the scale and urgency of Rhode Island's housing crisis. The following point from that letter is particularly pertinent:

Under the state's [Housing 2030 Plan](#),² Rhode Island aims to build approximately 100 housing units per year for extremely low-income residents. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, [Rhode Island has roughly 50,000 extremely low-income households](#),³ but fewer than 25,000 affordable and available rental homes for them. At the state's current pace, this amounts to a 250-year plan to address a crisis that is killing people now.

At the current pace of construction, the gap between need and supply for extremely low-income households is effectively permanent. Any serious strategy for addressing housing affordability must therefore confront that shortage at the bottom of the income distribution, where the consequences are most severe and immediate.

Finally, in reference to the second presentation on the agenda — Rhode Island's Winter Response to Homelessness — the administrative system that is supposed to manage this crisis is also failing. In a letter to the Executive Office of Housing, the Rhode Island Housing First Coalition demonstrated that the new system of Regional Access Points (RAPs) is not living up to expectations. Bluntly put, the situation is captured by the title *One Failed Homeless System Replaced by Another and Still Nowhere to Go*.⁴

Respectfully submitted,



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¹<https://tinyurl.com/Frozen2Death>

²<https://tinyurl.com/RIHP-2030>

³<https://nlihc.org/gap/state/ri>

⁴<https://tinyurl.com/CES2RAP>