



May 7, 2026

Honorable Louis DiPalma
Chair, House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House, 82 Smith Street, Providence RI 02903
Re: Support for S2681 – State Funded Rental Subsidy Program

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Crossroads Rhode Island, the state's leading provider of housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. I am writing to express my strong support for S2681, which would establish a state-funded rental subsidy program in Rhode Island.

Every day, we see firsthand that homelessness is not primarily a shelter problem, it's a housing affordability problem. Rhode Island has made meaningful progress in increasing housing production, but for the people we serve, those with the lowest incomes, often living with disabilities or complex health needs, those units remain out of reach without deeper affordability.

Rhode Island faces a shortage of more than 23,000 rental homes that are affordable and available to extremely low-income households, and more than 70% of those households are cost-burdened. Without a tool to bridge that gap, people remain stuck in shelters longer, cycle through crisis systems, or are forced to live outside.

At Crossroads, we are actively working to build permanent supportive housing, including our new Summer Street Apartments, providing housing for 176 formerly homeless adults. But developments like this only succeed when paired with operating support that ensures residents can afford to live there long-term. A state-funded rental subsidy is the missing piece that allows these investments to fully deliver on their promise.

S2681 creates a practical, proven solution by ensuring that eligible households pay no more than 30% of their income toward rent, while the subsidy fills the gap. This approach not only creates deeply affordable housing, but also stabilizes developments and maximizes the impact of existing state and federal investments.

Importantly, this bill is also fiscally responsible. We know that it is far more expensive to leave people homeless, relying on emergency shelters, hospitals, and crisis systems than it is to provide

stable housing. Investing in permanent housing reduces public costs while improving health outcomes and long-term stability.

Rhode Island cannot rely on federal resources alone. Today, only about one in four eligible households receives federal housing assistance, and that funding is increasingly uncertain. S2681 provides the state with a durable, flexible tool to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

If we are serious about ending homelessness, we must pair housing production with deep, sustained affordability. S2681 does exactly that.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on addressing Rhode Island's housing crisis. I respectfully urge you to support S2681.

Respectfully,



Michelle Wilcox
President & CEO