



May 7, 2026

The Honorable Senator Louis DiPalma, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence RI 02903

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2681  
AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES – HOUSING –  
STATE-FUNDED RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM**

Chair DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of United Way Rhode Island, we strongly support S 2681, which would establish the state-funded rental subsidy program. The act would authorize an initial capitalization of twenty-five million dollars to create the program to help Rhode Islanders with the lowest incomes exit homelessness and stay stably housed. United Way's policy and advocacy efforts follow our strategic framework: **Strong Families, Strong Nonprofits, Strong United Way**. We prioritize policies that strengthen household stability, expand access to opportunity, and ensure public investments deliver measurable value.

As a member of the Continuum of Care, United Way of Rhode Island has seen funding and operational support for project-based rental assistance and permanent supportive housing threatened by federal action and inaction. A dedicated rental subsidy program administered by the Rhode Island Executive Office of Housing is exactly the action the state needs to take to shore up the programs and community organizations that lead the work to end homelessness.

211, the front door to social services housed at United Way of Rhode Island, has taken 23,264 in the first three months of the year, 33% of whom have expressed housing needs, and 843 of those requesting rent payment assistance. Rising costs are pushing renters into housing instability, which has a deeply detrimental impact on economic outcomes for families especially. United Way of Rhode Island is centering household economic outcomes in our Family Stability Initiative, which has returned remarkable outcomes with relatively low per-family housing assistance.

United Way of Rhode Island respectfully urges your support for S 2681 and thanks you for sharing our commitment to the housing security of **Strong Families**.

Very best,  
Peggy Afonso  
Housing and Economic Development Policy, United Way Rhode Island