



The Honorable Jacob Bissallion
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing & Municipal Government
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

April 16, 2026

RE: Support for S2268, Faith Based Affordable Housing

Dear Chairman Bissallion and Members of the Committee:

Neighbors Welcome! Rhode Island (“Neighbors Welcome”) is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit and network of neighbors advocating for more homes in Rhode Island. Our goal is to promote strong and sustainable housing production so that residents across the state, at every stage of life, have housing options that meet their needs.

We are writing today in support of S2268, which would allow faith institutions across the state to help meet our housing needs by partnering with affordable housing providers to build new homes on land they own.

As Rhode Island works to address its housing shortage, we must creatively seek new partnerships and opportunities. Allowing faith institutions to meet their mission by turning land they own into new affordable homes is an opportunity Rhode Island cannot afford to pass up. Faith institutions own centrally located land in communities across our state, and already work to meet the basic needs of our neighbors through food pantries, rent assistance funds, and emergency winter shelter.

S2268 would allow faith institutions to partner with experienced affordable housing providers to build new homes on land that the institution either owns or controls through a long-term ground lease. These unique partnerships would:

- Allow congregations to fulfill their missions by supporting community members in need of an affordable place to call home, and
- Support congregations that are struggling with aging buildings and infrastructure to re-envision their space and meet community needs.

Recently, Legislatures in Virginia and Kentucky passed similar legislation, as have other states including Maryland, California, and Oregon. Several national efforts are underway to support faith institutions to undergo a discernment process to determine whether building affordable



housing is a good fit for the institution, as well as to help overcome technical barriers and build relationships and partnerships with mission driven affordable housing providers.

We thank Senator Kallman, the Chair, and their cosponsors for their dedication to addressing the housing shortage and the members of the Committee for hearing this bill today. Neighbors Welcome respectfully urges the Committee to support S2268 and advance policies that allow more homes to be built across our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristina Brown", written in a cursive style.

Kristina Brown
Executive Director
Neighbors Welcome! Rhode Island