



STATE of RHODE ISLAND  
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GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES  
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## Legislative Impact Statement

To: Senator Jacob Bissaillon, Chair  
Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee  
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary  
Re: 26 Senate 2584 AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES – HOME FIT DWELLING UNITS

Thursday, April 09, 2026

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. The Commission would be pleased to present testimony to the committee. Please contact me (462-01110) if testimony is desired or for additional information.

### **The Commission finds this bill beneficial.**

Accessible housing provides a home where a person with a disability can live independently and safely because of the existing features. These include entrances without steps, grab bars in the bathrooms, roll/walk-in showers, countertops and light switches that are at a height to be usable by someone using a wheelchair, doorways wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair, and many other features that allow someone to live independently if they have a mobility or other impairment.

Without accessible housing, a person with a mobility impairment faces the high likelihood of a fall, injury, hospitalization, or institutionalization. Lack of accessible housing also forces people to remain an unnecessarily long time in nursing facilities. Those who are ready to be discharged have a lack of options for safe, accessible places to live.

According to the CDC, 12.5% of the US population 18 and over have a mobility-related disability that results in serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.<sup>i</sup> According to the Administration for Community Living, for the US population 65 and older, that percentage is 21%.<sup>ii</sup> In order to accommodate for these populations, significant effort should be made to increase the amount of accessible housing.

The current state of accessible housing in Rhode Island is alarming, with less than 10% of the new housing stock meeting accessible standards.<sup>iii</sup> These barriers disproportionately burden people who are low-income and live with disabilities. The Center for Research on Disability

estimated that about 36.5% of people with disabilities spend a disproportionate amount of their income on housing, raising affordability as another contributing factor to inaccessible housing. Moreover, people with disabilities are over two times more likely to live in homes that lack a full kitchen and plumbing.<sup>iv</sup> These indicators demonstrate high rates of discrimination by landlords and the unwillingness to install accessibility features across Rhode Island.

Rhode Island is working towards increasing the amount of affordable housing in the state. While we move forward in this, we should also be ensuring that we provide an adequate amount of accessible housing to meet the needs of our state's population.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/disability-and-health/articles-documents/disability-impacts-all-of-us-infographic.html#:~:text=12.2%20percent%20of%20U.S.%20adults,with%20difficulty%20doing%20errands%20alone.>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Profile%20of%20OA/ACL\\_ProfileOlderAmericans2023\\_508.pdf](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Profile%20of%20OA/ACL_ProfileOlderAmericans2023_508.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0291228>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.researchondisability.org/resource/2025-disability-statistics-compendium-adsc/section-7-home-environments-compendium-2025>