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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 2694 AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- STATE BUILDING CODE--  
DISABLED VETERAN HOME MODIFICATION ACT

April 9, 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 (462-0110) if testimony is desired or for additional information.

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

The GCD finds this bill beneficial. Part of the work of the Commission promotes the right of people with disabilities to live in the community instead of facilities. This has been a central idea to the disability rights movement since it began in the 1970s.

Home modifications like ramps, lifts, walk-in showers or accessible appliances enable people with physical limitations to stay in their own home. When people with disabilities are able to remain in the community, they are able to maintain their independence, their social connections and their natural supports.

These modifications, however, are costly. This is why the Commission has a Livable Home Modifications program. This program helps with the costs of home modifications needed for a person with a disability to remain safely in their own home. Data from this program shows us the need and cost for home modifications. In State FY 25, our agency paid grants for 259 projects. The average cost of each project was \$7,210. (The GCD grant can only pay for half of the total cost up to \$4,500.) In addition to the costs of construction, an applicant may also have to pay building permit fees and inspection fees. This bill would remove the additional financial burden of those fees for disabled veterans.

It is also important to consider that not only is the ability to live in their own home a benefit to the individual with a disability, it is also cost saving for the state. If a person cannot live safely

at home due to their disability, their only alternative is a nursing facility. The estimated 2026 annual cost of a shared room in a nursing facility in Rhode Island is \$151,475.<sup>1</sup> This cost is much higher than it would be for a person to receive supports in their home.

For these reasons the state should advocate for programs that help residents with the financial costs of modifying their own homes to accommodate their disability.

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<sup>1</sup> [Nursing Home Costs by State and Region: Updated Jan 2026  
https://www.medicaidplanningassistance.org/nursing-home-costs/#:~:text=When%20considering%20applying%20for%20Medicaid%2C%20many%20individuals%20want](https://www.medicaidplanningassistance.org/nursing-home-costs/#:~:text=When%20considering%20applying%20for%20Medicaid%2C%20many%20individuals%20want)