

H. Philip West Jr.

April 2, 2026

The Honorable Jacob Bissaillon, Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT  
**Support 26-S 2899**

Thank you, Chair Bissaillon and members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Municipal Government for considering 26-S 2899 by Senators McKenney, Raptakis, Britto, Zurier, and Bissaillon.

Senator McKenney's legislation would update Rhode Island's Condominium Law with specific proposals to improve governance, accountability, and conflict resolution in condominium associations. Equally important, it would create a neutral mediator or ombudsman to help unit owners and association boards resolve disputes without the immediate need for costly litigation.

Nine years ago, my wife and I downsized from a large two-family home on the South Side of Providence to a cozy condominium in Pawtucket just north of the Providence line. Our unit is one of ten built as a row in 2005, beautifully designed and perfect for us. Like many other condo developments across Rhode Island, our condominium association relied on an overstressed executive board. The association's by-laws were confusing and sometimes sparked conflict. At one point, several of us hired an attorney who found the existing law made it virtually impossible for us to go to court without incurring far greater costs than we could afford.

If Senator McKenney's legislation had been law, we would have been saved a painful struggle to force disclosure of the association's financial records. While we could get access to insurance information, we could not get contracts, and we struggled to get bank statements. It took a year of conflict to force independent professional audit.

Just as Rhode Island's Access to Public Records Act forces public bodies to be accessible and accountable, Senator McKenney's proposed amendments to the Condominium Law will have the dual effect of increasing transparency and encouraging accountability. I respectfully urge this committee to recommend 2899 for passage by the full Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Philip West Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

H. Philip West Jr