



February 26, 2025

Representative Marvin L. Abney, Chair

House Finance Committee

Rhode Island State House


Providence RI, 02903

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BUDGET ARTICLE 5, SECTION 4

United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) is writing to express its support for Budget Article 5, Section 4, which is essential to ensuring that every Rhode Islander has access to safe and affordable housing. Through the LIFT UNITED Initiative of our LIVE UNITED 2025 Strategic Plan, we are committed to dismantling the barriers that impede equitable access to secure, quality homes. We believe that stable housing is a fundamental human right and the cornerstone of economic security, healthy communities, and long-term prosperity for historically marginalized populations.

Budget Article 5, Section 4, represents an opportunity to transform the housing landscape by expanding access to safe and affordable homes, strengthening support services, and providing essential financial resources that empower individuals and families to achieve long-term stability. According to the HUD Point in Time Count the number of individuals experiencing homelessness increased by 34.9% from 2023 to 2024—from 1,810 to 2,442—while the 2024 HousingWorks RI Fact Book reports that over one-third of Rhode Island households, approximately 143,023, are cost burdened. Given the current funding shortfalls—with philanthropic donations declining, state funding constrained, and federal funding streams increasingly uncertain—it is imperative that Rhode Island establish a dedicated, comprehensive funding stream, such as the hotel tax, to generate the revenue necessary to support affordable housing initiatives.

Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders



Housing is the foundation upon which individuals build their futures. By supporting Budget Article 5, Section 4, Rhode Island can make significant strides toward creating a state where every individual has the opportunity to live in a safe, affordable home. This investment in housing stability will help reduce long-term reliance on emergency assistance, strengthen our local economy, and promote a more just and equitable society. We urge you to support this measure and join us in our commitment to creating a Rhode Island where secure housing is within reach for all.

Sincerely,

Peggy Desjarlais

Housing and Economic Development Policy

United Way of Rhode Island

Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders

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