



Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
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February 27, 2025

Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairman
House Committee on Finance
35 State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for 2025 H-5076, by Rep. Abney, Article 5-sections 4,7,10

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing today to express support for Governor McKee's Budget, specifically Article 5-sections, 4,7, and 10. If passed, this legislation would provide critical funding that is necessary to adequately address, eliminate, and prevent future homelessness in Rhode Island.

At the Executive Office of Health and Human Service (EOHHS), one of our five strategic priorities is to address the root causes and social determinants of health. As such, EOHHS aims to prevent populations from becoming homeless when discharging from healthcare settings, leaving other institutions, transitioning between levels of care, or experiencing community-based episodes of housing instability. To do this, EOHHS partners with the Department of Housing in a variety of ways, including:

- Collaborating to implement low-barrier policies for supportive services in shelters and housing;
- Partnering with community to increase local, resident-informed pipelines that are accessible and safe;
- Maximizing alternatives like medical respite that transition clients into permanent supportive housing;
- Streamlining comprehensive services that follow clients through various living arrangements; and
- Growing, empowering, and sustaining the housing supportive services workforce.

Over the last several years, the homelessness shelter and other infrastructure have been predominantly funded with one-time pandemic funding. The Department of Housing has increased shelter capacity and invested in prevention and diversion programming. EOHHS has and continues to support these efforts as ensuring priority populations have wraparound services to increase housing retention and access to pathways to permanent housing while in the homelessness system.

In FY26, it is vital that Rhode Island ensures ongoing resources to support the homelessness response. With sustained investments, EOHHS envisions that individuals will have access to these services and housing resources without needing to enter the homelessness or shelter system at all.

Sincerely,

Richard Charest R., Ph, MBA
Secretary

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
T. Joseph Almond, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor
Sharon Reynolds Ferland, House Fiscal Advisor
Nicole M. McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker
Joseph Codega, Jr., State Budget Officer

