

February 27, 2025

Chairperson Marvin Abney  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for Article 5 – Housing and Homelessness Funding Measures

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of Crossroads Rhode Island, the state's leading provider of housing and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, I write to express my **strong support for Article 5**, which includes critical investments in housing, homelessness response, and tax policies that will directly impact the ability of Rhode Island to meet the growing housing needs of its residents.

Rhode Island is currently facing an unprecedented housing and homelessness crisis. Unsheltered homelessness has surged nearly 400% over the past five years, and the latest Point-in-Time count recorded 524 individuals—men, women, and children—living in places unfit for human habitation, a sharp rise from just 100 in 2020. At the same time, an independent report commissioned by the Rhode Island Foundation found that the state is nearly 25,000 affordable housing units below demand, placing Rhode Island among the worst states for housing production.

As the largest nonprofit housing provider in the state, Crossroads has been working tirelessly to meet the demand for both emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing. While we are actively building 300 new affordable permanent supportive apartments in Providence, including the 176-unit Summer Street Apartments set to open in 2025, we know these efforts alone will not be enough. A coordinated and adequately funded response is essential.

Article 5 takes meaningful steps to address these urgent challenges by ensuring that dedicated funding streams—including from the real estate conveyance tax and short-term rental taxes—are allocated to the Housing Resources and Homelessness Restricted Receipt Account. These measures will provide much-needed revenue to support housing development and homelessness services at a time when demand has never been higher.

Additionally, ensuring alignment between state-level housing policies and financing mechanisms is critical. The appointment of stable, experienced leadership at Rhode Island Housing and the Department of Housing is essential to ensuring that state investments are efficiently leveraged to expand affordable housing, streamline processes, and strengthen partnerships with local service providers.

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For these reasons, I urge this committee to **support the passage of Article 5** and reinforce the state's commitment to long-term, sustainable solutions to Rhode Island's housing crisis. We must act now to invest in housing as the key solution to ending homelessness and creating a more stable future for all Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership in addressing the state's urgent housing and homelessness challenges. I welcome any questions and look forward to working together on these critical issues.

Sincerely,



Michelle Wilcox  
President & CEO