



Representative Marvin Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee

April 9, 2025

**Support for H-6189 – An Act Relating to Taxation – Non Owner Occupied
Property Tax Act**

Chair Abney and Members of the Committee,

Rhode Island Working Families Power writes in strong support of H-6189, Rep. Ajello's bill to raise revenue from non-owner occupied homes above \$800,000. This bill would create revenue to fund state priorities like child care, education, roads, and transportation.

Working Families Power advocates for policies that promote economic justice and allow all residents to provide for themselves and their families and contribute to their communities. This legislation would advance those goals by asking residents who have prospered financially in the state to contribute slightly more for shared services.

Rhode Island is a small state. The vast majority of people who own expensive second homes in the state live elsewhere. Some of the wealthiest folks in the country have vacation houses in Rhode Island because of its beautiful environment and welcoming communities, which our residents are responsible for maintaining. This tax on expensive non-owner occupied homes would generate critical revenue for the state to continue to invest in and provide services to Rhode Islanders.

Rhode Island's current tax system is upside-down: in terms of income, the top filers are paying a lower rate in taxes to our state than our poorest and even our middle-income residents. This choice not only lets those who have earned the most throughout this pandemic off the hook for investment in our recovery, it keeps hundreds of millions of dollars in the pockets of the rich, instead of flowing through our programs, small businesses, and communities.

We can expect a challenging next few years in terms of federal funding and face the prospect of significant cuts to healthcare and education if we don't find a way to raise revenue to prevent those cuts. Please pass this legislation and let's invest in our neighbors for the long haul.

Respectfully submitted,

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler

Progressive Governance Director

Rhode Island Working Families Power