

# The Village Common of Rhode Island

*Aging Better Together*

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan, Chair

Testimony by H. Philip West, Jr., on March 27, 2025,  
in support of 25-H 5169 by Rep. Donovan, et. al.

### **FAMILY COUNCILS AND RESIDENT COUNCILS IN MANAGED RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES**

Thank you, Chairwoman Donovan and members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services for this hearing. **I testify in strong support for your bill 25-H 5169.**

My name is H. Philip West, Jr., and I serve as a volunteer lobbyist on behalf of The Village Common of Rhode Island, a statewide non-profit that helps older adults stay safely and independently in their homes. Our approach saves money and lives. Our motto is: "Aging Better Together."

The Rhode Island Department of Health lists 64 assisted living facilities within the state. With 25-H 5169 Rep. Donovan seeks to bridge the gap that often exists between administrators of assisted living facilities and both their residents and their residents' family members. It would:

- (1) Define "family council" and its intended function of fostering communication between administrators and both residents and their families and friends,
- (2) Define "resident council" in similar terms,
- (3) Direct the Department of Health to create clear disclosure of terms in residency agreements,
- (4) Require 120-day disclosure of increasing fees,
- (5) Require assisted living facilities to "authorize and assist" in establishing both resident and family councils,
- (6) Specify detailed procedures for creating both resident councils and family councils,
- (7) Require the administrator of each assisted living facility to notify the state's long-term care ombudsman regarding the creation of these councils,
- (8) Make clear that staff and visitors attend family and resident council meetings only at the council's invitation, and
- (9) Require the assisted living facility to respond within five business days to communications from the family or resident council.

**The Village Common sees 25-H 5169 as a valuable companion to 25-H 5170, and we support both bills in the hope that they will strengthen advocacy for nursing home and assisted living patients who often feel powerless. Both bills will empower older adults and those they trust to communicate more effectively with management of these essential institutions. We are convinced that their passage will improve the quality of life for residents and lessen stress for their loved ones.**

**On behalf of The Village Common, I urge the Committee on Health and Human Services to recommend 25-H 5170 for passage by the full House.**

Respectfully,



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