



*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

March 18, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-5795 – AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES

Chairman Craven and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, I write to express our support for House Bill 5795, which seeks to expand access to lower-cost homeownership opportunities by encouraging municipalities to allow townhome-style housing units. This legislation is an important step in addressing concerns raised by housing advocates and financial institutions regarding the need for more attainable housing options.

The League recognizes the importance of providing municipalities with the flexibility to permit townhomes—structures that share a party wall and a lot line but remain independent lots—in areas where zoning already allows the same density through vertical housing styles such as tenements or multi-family buildings. By allowing these types of developments, the bill promotes attainable homeownership while ensuring that zoning policies align with current housing market realities.

Encouraging townhome development is a crucial step toward increasing the supply of entry-level housing, which is essential for first-time homebuyers, young professionals, and families seeking stable housing options. Moreover, this approach supports economic mobility, strengthens local communities, and provides an effective alternative to high-density rental developments without requiring drastic changes to existing zoning frameworks.

The League acknowledges the diverse needs and characteristics of each municipality and is actively reviewing this legislation in collaboration with our members. As this review continues, we look forward to working with the bill's sponsor and other stakeholders to discuss potential amendments that further clarify and strengthen the bill's impact. Our goal is to ensure that the final language effectively supports Rhode Island's cities and towns while fostering responsible development practices.

We remain committed to policies that balance the need for housing and economic development with municipal autonomy and comprehensive planning. House Bill 5795 presents an important framework for helping municipalities address the state's housing needs while maintaining the integrity of local governance.

Thank you for your continued leadership and efforts to address housing challenges in Rhode Island. We look forward to engaging in further discussions on this important issue and working collaboratively toward a balanced and effective solution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Judiciary Committee