

January 25, 2024

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey  
Chair, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **H 7063**

Chair Casey:

RIPIN thanks the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing for the opportunity to submit this testimony **in support of H 7063**, which would incorporate universal design principals into new construction of low- and moderate-income housing to provide greater accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Founded in 1991, RIPIN is a statewide nonprofit that supports Rhode Islanders of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds in the areas of special education, health care, and healthy aging. Most of our staff are peer professionals—individuals who are caring for or have cared for a loved one with a disability. We support Rhode Islanders with disabilities throughout the lifespan, from infants and toddlers in Early Intervention, to older adults supported by our Care Management Program, and every stage in between.

RIPIN believes that ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities is not only a matter of social justice but also a step towards building more inclusive communities. Universal design principles go beyond mere compliance with accessibility standards—they strive to create environments that are welcoming, functional, and accessible to individuals of all abilities. By incorporating these principles into the construction of housing for low- and moderate-income individuals, we can foster greater independence and inclusivity for persons with disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities face numerous challenges when it comes to finding suitable housing that meets their needs. By adopting universal design principles, we can address these challenges and create living spaces that enhance the quality of life for all residents, irrespective of their physical abilities.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to live in a home that is not only affordable but also designed to accommodate their needs. This legislation represents a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive society.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.





Sincerely,

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