



January 25, 2024

House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island State House

Re: **Testimony SUPPORTING House Bills 7063 and 7062**, requiring that universal design principles be incorporated into new construction of low- and moderate-income housing to provide greater accessibility for persons with disabilities; and providing for uniform zoning standards for accessory dwelling units.

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of House Bills 7063 and 7062.

Both of these bills will make it possible for Rhode Islanders to continue to live in their own homes with greater independence, even as their abilities may diminish. ABC-RI advocates for residents of long-term care facilities, but also supports any reasonable policy that can prevent individuals from requiring such facilities.

Universal design features make it possible for older Rhode Islanders and those with disabilities to live with greater independence in their own homes, and at less expense to themselves and to the state than if they had to move into a care facility. Trying to function in spaces that don't use universal design principles can be painful, humiliating, and often impossible for those living with disabilities.

ADUs enable homeowners to close-habitate with loved ones, or to supplement their income while increasing housing stock, which we know is critically low in RI.

Rhode Island was recently ranked by WalletHub as the fourth worst state in which to retire. These two measures would go a long way towards improving that reputation, as well as the quality of life of many Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your time and attention, and for all of your work on behalf of all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Gerard,
ABC-RI