



Testimony of Matthew Netto, AARP Rhode Island

**In support of House Bill 7382**

House Municipal Government & Housing Committee

March 7, 2024

Chairman Casey and Members of the Municipal Government & Housing Committee:

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with 38 million members nationwide and nearly 128,000 members here in Rhode Island. We advocate on behalf of issues that impact older adults, and we appreciate the opportunity to offer our support for allowing unrelated persons to live together as House Bill 7382 By Representative Baginski intends to do.

“House Sharing” is a housing arrangement where a person who has a home invites a friend, family member, or tenant, to move in and help with expenses and chores. The setup might involve people of the same age or generation and the arrangement is one of peers residing together for companionship and cost efficiency. Sometimes two or more friends purchase or rent a residence together and become housemates.

Another house sharing scenario can revolve around the needs of an elderly property owner who doesn't want to relocate but can no longer care for herself or a large home entirely on her own. A younger person (and younger can even mean someone who's 60 or older) may be willing to provide some caregiving and transportation assistance in exchange for affordable or flexible housing. If so, the two can make for well-matched housemates.<sup>1</sup>

House Bill 7382 would ensure that house sharing is a viable option for all Rhode Islanders. This bill would provide that the maximum number of unrelated persons living together in a household could not be less than one person per bedroom and would not exceed five unrelated persons per dwelling.

According to Statista/AARP analysis of data available by United States Census Bureau (USCB), in 2024 more than 1800 older adults (aged 55+) are expected to be evicted and close to 750 older adults (aged 55+) are expected to experience homelessness in 2024 in Rhode Island. HB 7382 would help in easing the housing supply and assist in lowering the eviction and homelessness rate by providing affordable housing to the older residents of Rhode Island.”

The HomeShare Oregon program states that if they could match 2% of the homeowners that have spare bedrooms, 30,000 people could have access to affordable housing and 30,000 more homeowners at risk of foreclosure could stay in their homes all with no new infrastructure development<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> aarp.org <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/creative-age-friendly-housing-options.html>

<sup>2</sup> HomeShare Oregon. <https://www.homeshareoregon.org/why-homeshare>

As the state of Rhode Island looks to address the housing crisis we must create opportunities for creative housing solutions such as house sharing. House Bill 7382 would set a standard that allows creative housing solutions for all Rhode Islanders, especially older residents.

How does this House Bill 7382 benefit older adult homeowners and renters in Rhode Island?

- **Social connection:** Home Sharing will allow older adults to live together. Research showed that seniors living together whether at home or retirements community live healthier compared to those who live alone<sup>3</sup>.
- **Economic Benefit:** as mentioned before home sharing can be an extra income for homeowners and affordable housing for renters.
- **Age in Place:** By home sharing, seniors can age in place without facing economic strains and do not need to leave their houses.

House Bill 7382 is a great bill that will help to provide livable communities and affordable housing for all Rhode Islanders. We ask that you recommend passage. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



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<sup>3</sup> AARP.

<https://aarpsharex.sharepoint.com/sites/StateReportingHome/statereporting/Lists/2017Media/Attachments/8369/Seniors%20Home%20Sharing%204-3-17.pdf>