

113 Montauk Road
Narragansett, RI 02882

March 7, 2024

Chair Casey and Members
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
State House
Providence, Rhode Island

Re: **Oppose H 7382 – Changing Household Definition for Zoning**

Dear Chair Casey and Committee Members:

I **oppose H 7382** which proposes to change the definition of household in the state's enabling legislation for municipal zoning ordinances. I ask the General Assembly to retain the current definition of Household.

The current definition of "household" in Section 45-24-31 enables municipalities to limit the number of unrelated people living in a single family dwelling to 3 or more people. This is a well established definition in Rhode Island and in states across the nation.

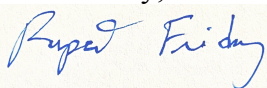
The proposed definition eliminates the current standard and replaces it with "one per bedroom and shall not exceed five unrelated persons per dwelling." **The proposed definition would upend zoning and end single-family housing in Rhode Island.** That definition **enables every dwelling to be used as a rooming house.**

This change in definition is being proposed as "improving affordable housing." Actually, the result is just the opposite. The results of the proposed definition can be seen in Narragansett where real estate speculation for seasonal and short term rentals have made housing unaffordable for families and people working in the community.

Instead of helping housing affordability, **this legislation is a boon for real estate speculators and the Air B & B industry.** It is more lucrative to rent houses by the bedroom than to rent houses to families. This legislation prioritizes a property owner's return-on-investment over housing affordability, availability of family housing, and the stability of neighborhoods. The legislation also maximizes builder's profit margins instead of supporting the interests of families who are seeking inexpensive entry-level housing and home ownership. This legislation would be one more incentive for developers and builders to feed a market for large, expensive, 5-bedroom rooming houses that are perfect for Air B & B party rental. Residents of rooming houses are more transient than families thus **this legislation will reduce housing affordability and the stability of neighborhoods across Rhode Island.**

I respectfully request that the Committee not approve H 7382 and retain the current definition of households in the state's enabling legislation.

Sincerely,



Rupert Friday

Rupert Friday has a master's degree in planning and over 30 years professional planning experience. He led Maryland Department of Planning's "Local Government Assistance Program." He currently is a member of the Narragansett Planning Board and a member of a joint committee of Planning Board with the Narragansett Affordable Housing Collaborative.