



March 12, 2024

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chairman
House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Written Testimony Expressing Concerns regarding H 7651

Dear Chairman Casey,

As a property developer and longtime Providence business owner and resident, I am submitting written testimony to this committee expressing my significant concern with the proposed legislative changes to the state's "8-law" statute. This policy has proven to be a pivotal tool in fostering economic growth and urban development within our city at a time when our state desperately needs to build more housing at all income levels. This is the exact wrong time to take these tools away!

We contend that Rhode Island should be providing more tools and programs to build housing, not further restricting a law that has been successful means to that end. While we understand and respect the intention behind revising this law to address housing affordability and equity, we believe the proposed changes are far too restrictive and create additional barriers that will prohibit the city's ability to build much-needed housing. The existing requirements of the 8-law statute have been instrumental in attracting investments, revitalizing neighborhoods, and creating jobs in Providence.

We urge a more balanced approach that considers the economic implications and involves a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process. We believe that any amendments to the 8-law should be made with careful consideration of their long-term impact on Providence's economic health and development prospects.

We are committed to working collaboratively to find solutions that promote sustainable growth while addressing housing needs. However, we fear that the proposed changes might deter future investments, hindering our collective efforts to enhance the city's vitality and competitiveness and increase our housing stock.

We respectfully request that the proposed changes be reconsidered and that a more inclusive and measured approach be taken.

We look forward to an opportunity to discuss this matter further and to contribute to shaping a prosperous future for all Providence residents.

Sincerely,

Christopher Marsella