

The Honorable Stephen Casey,

May 9, 2024

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

Re: Support for H7981 (Duplexes and Mixed-use Districts)

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing:

My name is Cedric Ye, I am a 15 year old high school student, and I am writing in support of bill H7981, which proposes to allow more duplexes across the state and more apartments in commercial zones.

In 2016, the Rhode Island Housing and Finance Corporation warned that our state needed to add approximately 40,000 homes over the next ten years in order to meet demand. Since then, we have added less than half that number—approximately 18,000—and demand has only increased in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, last year Rhode Island issued the **fewest** housing permits per-capita of any state in the US, while average housing prices have reached a historic high.

I am 15 years old, meaning I have seven years until I graduate college. Today, home ownership is already extremely challenging, and if these trends continue unchecked for seven more years, home ownership will become simply impossible for my generation and we will be priced out of the state.

Duplexes and mixed-use districts are exactly the type of “gentle density” that made up Rhode Island’s historic character and can help us address the current housing shortage. My family currently lives in a duplex surrounded by other duplexes and apartments, none of which are currently legal by-right according to our current zoning codes; if my block burned down

tomorrow, we would not be allowed to rebuild it exactly how it was, which seems nonsensical in the context of Rhode Island's historic character, or our dire housing crisis.

I urge you to support a strong version of this extremely important bill so that residents can continue to afford a home in the state that we all love. In particular:

- Please maintain the provision legalizing duplexes by right on at least 30% of the developable land in each city and town (which the city or town can choose how to implement); and
- Please legalize mixed-use districts broadly. One district per city and town is not enough, particularly without guardrails to ensure that districts are designed meaningfully.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cedric Ye
43 Irving Avenue, Providence, RI

Cedric Ye
cedric.ye9@gmail.com
43 Irving Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island 02906