



Testimony of Matthew Netto, AARP Rhode Island  
**In Opposition of House Bill 8131**  
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee

April 11, 2024

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

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with 38 million members nationwide and nearly 125,000 members here in Rhode Island. We advocate on behalf of issues that impact older adults, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 8131, amending the Rhode Island property tax statute pertaining to tax exemptions for residents of the Town of Bristol changing eligibility to those who are over the age of 65 and who have continuously owned and resided in their primary residence in the town for at least 20 years.

AARP supports property tax relief that is equitable, cost-effective, and targeted to homeowners with low and moderate incomes burdened by their property tax bill. House Bill 8131 would only offer relief to residents who have owned a home and resided in it continuously for over 20 years. There are no income thresholds included in this provision, making it inequitable to those who need it the most. Under the proposed legislation, a million-dollar home would receive the same amount of tax relief as a median valued home.

During the March Bristol Town Council meeting it was noted that changes to the “elderly exemption” are being made due to a rise in first time applicants. Rising demand is making this program more costly to the town so adjustments need to be made to ensure sustainability, understandably. However, it is our policy that those adjustments be made to support who needs the relief the most. This piece of legislation does not accomplish that.

AARP Rhode Island respectfully opposes House Bill 8131. While the intent to provide property tax relief to older residents is commendable, it should be done in a targeted way that benefits those who need it the most.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Have a great day!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt R. Netto".

Matt Netto, AARP RI, Associate State Director of Advocacy  
401-834-0524 / mnetto@aarp.org