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# Housing Network of Rhode Island and Homes RI Highlight 2025 Legislative Priorities to Address Statewide Housing Crisis

**PROVIDENCE, RI** – The [Housing Network of Rhode Island](#) and [Homes RI](#) announced their 2025 legislative priorities, calling for bold investments and policy reforms to increase the supply of safe, healthy, and affordable housing across the state. The policy agenda focuses on expanding housing development, creating a sustainable funding stream for housing and homelessness resources, and promoting housing stability for Rhode Islanders.

“Our state continues to face a housing crisis that demands sustained action and systemic change,” said **Melina Lodge, Executive Director of the Housing Network of Rhode Island**. “This year’s priorities reflect our shared commitment to ensuring that Rhode Island is a place where all residents—regardless of income—can access a stable, affordable home in a thriving community.”

“My RI 2030 plan makes it clear: we must build on our momentum and take bold action to increase housing production and establish sustainable funding to address homelessness and housing insecurity,” said **Governor Dan McKee**. “Through my FY26 budget proposal and our Housing 2030 blueprint, my administration has outlined concrete steps to tackle these challenges, and we ask our legislative partners to support these initiatives.”

“Prior to our recent efforts to address Rhode Island’s housing shortage, the last substantive land use legislation passed in our state was in the 1990s. Since then, too many communities have become more and more restrictive about how much and what types of housing they’ll allow to be constructed. As a result, Rhode Island was ranked dead last in the nation for new housing for multiple years consecutively,” said **House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi**. “However, we are making real, sustained progress. The General Assembly has enacted nearly 50 new housing laws, one of which created our state’s first-ever court calendar dedicated specifically to housing and land use issues. In just over a year since it was implemented, the backlog of pending cases has been cut almost in half. Additionally, 2023 had a 70% increase in building permits sought in Rhode Island – the most in a single year since before the Great Recession. This progress is the result of many partners working together collaboratively, and we need to keep the momentum going.”

"It's an honor to serve as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Housing & Municipal Government, and it is a privilege to work closely with the Housing Network of Rhode Island and so many other incredible advocates," said **Senator Jacob E. Bissaillon, Chairman, Senate Committee on Housing & Municipal Government**. "I am grateful to President Lawson and our Senate leadership team, as well as Governor McKee, Speaker Shekarchi, and my fellow legislators who are supporting critical investments and needed action to make housing more available and affordable in Rhode Island. Everyone deserves the dignity, stability and opportunity that safe and affordable housing provides, and we must act with urgency to achieve our housing goals."

"Since becoming a homeowner, a weight I didn't even know I was carrying has lifted. That stability changed everything for us," said **Aliyya DeMartino, a housing advocate and new homeowner**. "But I still fear for hardworking families who are being priced out of their rentals, or being forced to move out because their building is being renovated, or turned into a seasonal rental. These are families and individuals who live here year-round, contribute to our local economies, and work in jobs that provide the basic services we all use and need to thrive. Creating access to affordable housing is essential to building stronger communities, stable families, and a more equitable Rhode Island."

Key proposals include:

- **Implementing land use reforms to further housing development**, including support for [Speaker Shekarchi's 12-bill housing package](#), which streamlines approval processes, encourages flexible uses of land and existing structures, and strengthens the state's *Low and Moderate Income Housing Act*.
- **Creating a new dedicated funding stream for housing and homelessness** by closing a tax loophole and applying the 5% hotel tax to whole-home short-term rentals (H-5076, Budget Article 5), projected to generate \$2.1 million in FY26 and \$4.7 million in FY27.
- **Raising the real estate conveyance tax** on high-value properties (from 0.92% to 1.25%) to fund the Housing Resources and Homelessness Fund (H-5076, Budget Article 5), expected to raise \$2.3 million in FY26 and \$3.4 million in FY27.
- **Establishing standards for fair tax assessment** of deed-restricted affordable homes for sale to help ensure predictability in tax payments for low-income homeowners (H-5698 | S-499).
- **Ensuring fair and consistent tax treatment of deed-restricted affordable housing developments** by clarifying the application of property taxes equal to 8% or less of the previous years' gross scheduled rental income ( H5688 | S963).
- **Enacting just cause eviction protections** (H-5503 | S-212) to prevent arbitrary, retaliatory, and/or discriminatory evictions and prevent unreasonable rent increases to promote long-term housing stability.

In addition to housing-specific measures, the agenda also includes coalition-based priorities to increase voter access through same-day registration (HJR-5515 | SJR-820), advance tax equity through a new income tax bracket for the top 1% (H-5473 | S-329), and protect public transportation by allocating \$32.6 million to close RIPTA's FY26 operating deficit (HJR-6020 | SJR-342).

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**The Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI)** is a statewide association of 20 community development corporations and affordable housing developers working to build and preserve affordable homes and revitalize communities. Their wide array of activities—including real estate development, financial asset building, housing counseling, resident empowerment, and engagement, and much more—creates tangible community change and transforms the lives of Rhode Islanders.

**Homes RI** is a coalition of organizations committed to expanding access to safe, healthy, and affordable homes across the state. HNRI serves as the coalition's backbone organization.