

## RI BILLS TO WATCH

### Legislative Update - February 28, 2020

From your RIAR Government Affairs representative, David Salvatore.

#### H 7294 / S 2081: RIAR Supports

These bills, introduced on behalf of the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® (RIAR), would allow condominium associations to impose a fee on a unit owner up to \$125 for the preparation of a resale certificate. I testified in support of both bills this month.

During the 2019 legislative session, RIAR asked the General Assembly to approve legislation that would provide for a civil penalty to enforce the delivery of the resale certificate in accordance with state law—within ten days of request. After hearing from members and condominium owners, RIAR has learned that some condominium associations are using the resale certificate as a money-making scheme. As you know, lenders require all financial documents to be dated in the same month, which forces condominium unit owners to purchase multiple resale certificates during the transaction. This bill would cap the amount of the resale certificate at \$125, mitigating the opportunity for abuse by the condominium association.

[Click Here Read the House bill](#)

[Read the Senate bill Here](#)

#### H 7850: RIAR Opposes

**This bill would authorize cities and towns to classify residential property that is rented as a short-term rental as commercial property.**

RIAR is concerned that this legislation would be used as a tool by municipalities to collect new revenue, since the commercial tax rates in many cities and towns are among the highest in the country. By unfairly treating certain homeowners, this legislation would have an adverse impact on Rhode Island's economy, since Rhode Island's tourism industry benefits by offering this rental option to visitors.

[Read the bill](#)

#### S 2482: RIAR Opposes

**Speaking of short-term rentals, this bill was defeated by RIAR for the past two years. The legislation would treat short-term rentals as "public accommodations". Additionally, the bill incorporates fair housing language that is not consistent with rules promulgated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).**

The technically broad language in the bill concerns RIAR, since the Fair Housing Act covers most housing. However, in some circumstances the Act exempts owner-occupied buildings with no more than four units, single-family housing sold or rented without the use of a broker and housing operated by organizations. Moreover, treating residential dwellings as public accommodations presents significant challenges to sustaining a neighborhood's high quality of life.

[Read the bill](#)

#### H 7406: RIAR Supports

**Last week, I updated you on legislation (H 7331) that would allow the Department of Environmental Management to extend the deadline for required sewer construction in the replacement of cesspools. I testified in support of this important bill. I was also happy to see that legislation was filed that would provide financial relief via a non-refundable tax credit to homeowners who connect a residential dwelling to a municipal sewer system.**

The costs of connecting a residential dwelling to a municipal sewer system can be high. For families struggling to make ends meet or individuals or couples living on a fixed income, this bill provides homeowners with the ability to comply with the State's efforts to protect the environment, while providing much-needed monetary relief.

[Read the bill](#)