



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

April 23, 2019

Chairwoman Prata
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903

Re: S0231 -- An Act Relating to Property -- Immigration Status (Support)

Dear Chairwoman Prata and Members of the Committee,

As Executive Director of the Providence Human Relations Commission, I write to you today in full support of Senate Bill 0231.

Impaneled in 1963, the Providence Human Relations Commission works to protect and expand residents' rights to fair housing, education, employment, credit and public accommodations, free from discrimination.

Housing is a fundamental human right -- one that is independent from a tenant's country of ancestral origin, race, ethnicity, and countless other facets of their identity. In fact, the federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of dwellings based on race, ethnicity and national origin. As the Trump administration continues to target the immigrant community, most recently proposing a rule through HUD vetting the immigration status of all members of families applying for subsidized or public housing, it is imperative the State codify protections for residents to be able to access safe housing.

Senate Bill 0231 creates protections for Rhode Island's immigrant community, especially vulnerable to exploitative housing dynamics and discrimination in the face of the Trump administration's continued persecution of immigrant families. In 2015, 13.5% of the State's population was foreign-born, 15% of the state's population was U.S.-born with at least one immigrant parent, and nearly 55% of immigrants in Rhode Island were naturalized U.S. citizens. It is time we reform our systems with compassion, and ensure a third of our state equal protections in accessing housing. As such, I urge you to consider passing Senate Bill 0231. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sol Taubin".

Sol Taubin
Executive Director
Providence Human Relations Commission