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## **ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT**

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF 21-S 563, RELATING TO PROPERTY -- RHODE ISLAND FAIR HOUSING PRACTICES ACT March 11, 2021**

The ACLU of Rhode Island supports this legislation, which would make a number of changes to the laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Among other things, S-563 would eliminate unnecessary, and already archaic, language that was included in the statutes when this anti-discrimination law was passed many years ago; remove inappropriate exemptions in the fair housing law that affirmatively allow discrimination in thousands of housing units across the state; and add language to the Fair Housing Act that mirrors a provision in the Fair Employment Practices Act designed to prevent coercive settlement tactics from defendants that have the effect of preventing victims from recovering their attorneys' fees.

In the year 2021, none of these amendments should be controversial. They will modernize the law and help ensure the protection from discrimination that the statutes were always designed to protect. We urge passage of this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of these views.