

Testimony in Favor of HB 1732-FN:

“AN ACT relative to housing accessibility and voucher allocation in new multi-unit developments.”

Rep. Timothy Horrigan (Strafford 10); January 20, 2026

House Housing Committee

HB 1732 would establish two new requirements for newly-built multi-unit housing developments, in the interest of making them more inclusive. It covers new developments with six or more units, applying to at least 5% of the units in those developments. Units with 6 to 19 total units would henceforth have to have at least one such unit which meets two listed requirements. Units with 20 or more unit would have to have at least one such unit for every 20 units.

I will address the second listed requirement first. Effected dwelling units would have to meet universal design standards, as defined by the United States Access Board. Those standards are guided by seven principles.

1. **Equitable Use.** (Designing for everyone who uses the space.)
2. **Flexibility in Use.** (Adaptable and customizable design.)
3. **Simple and Intuitive Use.**
4. **Perceptible Information.** (Making it easy to understand where to go and what to do.)
5. **Tolerance for Error.**
6. **Low Physical Effort.** (Making it easy for anyone to get around.)
7. **Size and Space for Approach and Use.** (Designing spaces which accommodate everyone.)

Dwellings designed specifically for disabled people have higher standards, but all those principles apply to non-disabled people. We should remember that any non-disabled person can become disabled at any time, especially those of us who live long enough to become old. Also, we all have friends and family members with disabilities who might want to be able to come visit us. There are lots of people out there who experience disabilities. In 2024, the Centers for Disease Control estimated that 70 million American adults have disabilities, which is about 1/4 of the adult population.

The first listed requirement is that 5% of the units must be designated for individuals who have federal Mainstream Housing Vouchers. Those vouchers are similar to conventional “Section 8” vouchers, but are reserved for non-elderly disabled people and their immediate families, and have separate funding. Those can be used for non-accessible housing.

Please vote “Ought to Pass” on HB 1792, the “Inclusive Housing Developments” bill.