



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, *Secretary of State*

May 26, 2026

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr., Chair
House Committee on Corporations

RE: House Bill 7844, An Act Relating to Corporations, Associations, and Partnerships –
Rhode Island Business Corporation Act

Dear Chair Solomon,

I am writing today to share my feedback on House Bill 7844, legislation relating to businesses that register with the Rhode Island Department of State's Business Services Division. The proposal also gives new authorities and responsibilities to the Business Services Division.

The Department's Business Services Division maintains Rhode Island's business registry, which records new business formations, ongoing business registration activity, and annual reports for more than 110,355 active entities registered in our state. The Division also provides thoughtful guidance and comprehensive services to those looking to start and maintain a business or non-profit in Rhode Island, including Virtual Office Hours, live trainings, and the RI Business Assistant. These responsibilities, among others, are performed by nineteen talented and professional staff members.

House Bill 7844 proposes adding responsibilities to the Business Services Division's work that it does not currently have the capacity to undertake. The first of these is to undertake enforcement of foreign businesses or sole proprietorships that fail to register and to levy civil penalties on these businesses. The Business Services Division does not currently act as an enforcement agency. As such, at our current staffing levels, the Department of State does not have the capacity to assess and collect the penalty or to compel businesses to produce records on their gross receipts.

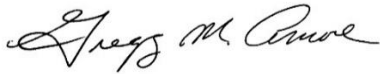
Another capacity concern is the requirement of businesses to produce a certificate of good standing within ten business days. While the Business Services Division is currently able to provide certificates of good standing within two business days, we would like to note that a significant influx of requests may lead to processing delays and backlogs.

Finally, House Bill 7844 proposes that the Department of State collect additional information on trade name filings. The Division is currently in the process of modernizing its online filing system, and additional time and financial resources would be required to incorporate these additional fields. Should this legislation progress, the Department respectfully requests a budget allocation for changes to the online filing system, as well as an adjustment to the implementation date of these sections, which is currently upon the bill's passage.

Our team welcomes discussions on potential amendments to this legislation to ensure the Business Services team continues to have the capacity to provide Rhode Island business owners with the high level of service they have come to expect from our office.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at marias@sos.ri.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gregg M. Amore".

Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Corporations
The Honorable Stephen M. Casey