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ACLU OF RI POSITION: AMEND

TESTIMONY ON THE STATE BUDGET, H-7225, ARTICLE 3, SECTION 20, RELATING TO STATE PURCHASES February 27, 2024

This section of the proposed budget amends R.I.G.L. § 37-2-18, relating to “Competitive Sealed Bidding.” Some of these amendments touch on the intersection of the bidding process with the state’s Access to Public Records Act (APRA). We understand that the bill’s intent is to modernize the bidding laws in recognition of the state’s move from a paper to an online bidding process. However, we are concerned that some of the proposed amendments, however unintentionally, weaken the public’s access to bidding documents, and the ACLU of Rhode Island therefore urges revisions to this budget article.

In that regard, we have consulted with representatives of the Department of Administration and have come up with technical revisions to this budget provision that we believe address our open government concerns. We understand that the DOA will be presenting those amendments to the committee, and the ACLU is supportive of those changes.

Thank you for your consideration of these amendments.