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## **ACLU OF RI POSITION: OPPOSE**

### **TESTIMONY ON 25-H 5747, AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND May 1, 2025**

While the ACLU of RI does not have a position on two of the three sections contained in this legislation, we strongly oppose the addition of Section 2, adding a new statute, “Tort claims against the board of trustees.”

The proposed legislation appears designed to broadly insulate the Board of Trustees of URI from tort liability for *proven* misconduct by establishing additional defenses, limitations on recovery, and the time for an injured person to act over and above those generally available for tort defendants. In doing so, it could, in many cases, leave an injured person without any recourse for those wrongful actions. For example, unlike the usual three-year statute of limitations to bring an action for personal injury, a person claiming an injury caused by the Board of Trustees would be required to first present the claim to the Board within 90 days of the accrual of the cause of action (the injury), and would be “forever barred” from recovery if they failed to do so. The proposed legislation sets two years as the outside limit to bring suit, when the standard is three years for everyone else, including the State and local municipal governments.

The ACLU of RI believes there is no need to create extraordinary protections for the URI Board of Trustees, particularly as compared to other government entities. Because the proposed legislation would severely limit injured persons in achieving meaningful recovery in tort, the ACLU of Rhode Island opposes its passage with the inclusion of Section 2.

Submitted by:  
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