



*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

February 11, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-7551 – RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- FRAUD AND FALSE DEALING

Dear Chair McEntee and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we wish to thank the sponsor, Speaker Pro Tem Kennedy and AARP for allowing us to weigh in on this version of House Bill 7551. This legislation represents an important step forward in addressing real estate title fraud and providing meaningful protections for property owners while supporting municipalities in carrying out their responsibilities.

Some notable updates in this legislation include clear provisions to hold municipal officials harmless. We particularly appreciate that the bill explicitly ensures that municipal recorders and other officials acting in good faith are not subject to liability under these provisions. As stated in the bill:

“Nothing in this section shall be construed as creating a cause of action against any public official or employee, including without limitation, a municipal clerk or any employee or agent of a clerk of a municipality, for actions taken in good faith on this section or on information provided by a third-party system or vendor in the performance of the clerk’s duties.”

We were also assured that, for municipalities that may have limited resources, a property alert notification system can be as simple as an email or phone call. This enables municipalities to notify property owners without needing to purchase or hire expensive third-party platforms. The intent is to provide a practical, low-cost option for keeping property owners informed about filings affecting their property.

The bill also enables municipalities to provide educational information to property owners. Municipalities may, by mail, website, newspaper advertisement, or other media: Share educational information on deed fraud; and Provide information about the property alert notification system established under this section.

Additionally, the provision allowing a municipality to index or otherwise create a searchable log of recorded documents enables local officials to organize and provide access to land record information, giving municipalities flexibility to implement a system that works for them without creating undue administrative or financial burdens.

By combining these protections, municipal enabling tools, and low-cost notification options, House Bill 7551 strengthens safeguards for property owners while empowering cities and towns to take an active role in preventing real estate fraud.

Thank you again for your leadership and for including municipalities and stakeholders in this important discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Judiciary Committee