



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, Secretary of State

February 11, 2026

The Honorable Carol H. McEntee, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

RE: In support H7551 - An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Fraud and False Dealing

Dear Chair McEntee,

I write this letter in support of House Bill 7551, legislation that would establish criminal penalties for real estate title fraud and would stipulate parameters and infrastructure to mitigate this fraudulent activity.

The Department of State's Business Services Division is responsible for administering notary public commissions and providing ongoing education to notaries public. Individuals committing deed fraud may present fraudulent documents to a notary public or forge a notary's signature and stamp to make their fraudulent documents look real.

This legislation allows a notarial officer to refuse to perform a notarial act if there is insufficient information to verify an individual's identity, ensuring they do not unwittingly notarize fraudulent documents. We support this provision.

In addition to supporting this legislation, our Business Services team is integrating additional safeguards into a forthcoming upgrade to the online filing system. They are also exploring opportunities to provide information on preventing deed fraud in future training for notaries public.

I urge the Committee to support House Bill 7551, as this legislation will help prevent fraud and establish the infrastructure needed to mitigate its consequences.

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

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
The Honorable Brian Patrick Kennedy