



State of Rhode Island COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

180 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 – Tel. 401-222-2661

TESTIMONY

BILL NO.: 2026 H 7442
AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS –
INSPECTOR OF PERSONNEL FILES

PRIMARY SPONSORS: Representative Shanley

COMMITTEE: House Labor

DATE: February 5, 2026

The Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights (“Commission”) **supports this bill.**

The Commission is the state’s primary antidiscrimination law enforcement agency charged with investigating allegations of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and delivery of services.

This bill defines personnel records, provides for greater ability of employees to obtain the records, and, of particular interest to the Commission, sets forth how long personnel records must be maintained.

Under this bill, personnel records must be maintained for at least three years and, if a charge of discrimination is filed with the Commission, the records must be maintained until the final disposition of the charge.

The three-year retention limit preserves records even before a discrimination charge is filed. This information is crucial for employees and employers when a discrimination case charge is filed and the matter is under investigation. The information in the employee’s own file and in the files of other employees can show whether there is disparate treatment. It also allows employers to preserve their knowledge of the rationale for their adverse actions even if the relevant management employees have left their employment. The provision for retention until the final disposition of a discrimination charge allows full investigation before records are destroyed.

For these reasons, the Commission urges passage.

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