



*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

April 15, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese, Chair
House Labor Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE BILL 7040– AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- MUNICIPAL POLICE ARBITRATION

Dear Chairman Corvese and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we want to begin by expressing our deep appreciation for the dedication and service of Rhode Island’s municipal police officers. Their commitment to public safety is essential to the well-being of our communities, and we value the work they do every day to protect residents.

At the same time, we are writing to express our concerns regarding House Bill 7040, which would provide that all contractual provisions in a municipal police collective bargaining agreement continue until a successor agreement has been reached or an interest arbitration award has been rendered. While we understand the intent behind this legislation, we believe it presents significant challenges to the fiscal health of municipalities and to responsible municipal governance.

House Bill 7040 would constrain municipal leaders during labor negotiations by automatically extending collective bargaining agreements. Removing the natural expiration of contracts reduces the incentive for both parties to engage in timely and meaningful negotiations, potentially slowing the resolution of disputes and undermining the negotiation process.

Additionally, the proposed automatic and indefinite contract continuation does not account for the diverse financial realities of Rhode Island’s cities and towns. While temporary extensions can be appropriate in certain cases to support negotiations and maintain labor relations, a broad, one-size-fits-all mandate could exacerbate financial pressures for municipalities already contending with constrained budgets, increasing pension and healthcare obligations, and rising personnel costs.

Personnel costs represent the largest portion of municipal spending. Delaying contract renegotiations through automatic continuation could result in higher property taxes or reductions in essential public services.

While the League recognizes the importance of positive labor relations, we believe House Bill 7040 imposes an undue burden on municipalities and taxpayers. We remain committed to working with the bill’s sponsors and other stakeholders to explore alternative measures that balance fiscal responsibility, effective governance, and the interests of both municipal police and the residents they serve.

The League appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and share our perspective with the committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. R. Rossi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randy" and last name "Rossi" clearly distinguishable.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Labor Committee