

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chair

House Municipal Government and Housing Committee

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for **House Bill 2026 – H7370** (attached for reference), which seeks to modernize and improve the way public notices are published in the towns of Burrillville and Glocester. Media consumption has shifted dramatically. Many people now get news online or through community updates rather than traditional print newspapers.

Currently, our municipalities are required to publish notices in newspapers of general circulation, which are located outside our communities. While this meets statutory requirements, it does not effectively reach our residents. For example, Burrillville's notices in the nearest city newspaper reach only a small fraction of our population, approximately 150 people. This is far below what is necessary for meaningful public engagement.

H7370 provides a practical solution by allowing notices to be published in any newspaper circulating within either municipality or on other designated digital or print platforms chosen by the town councils. This flexibility ensures that notices can be delivered through channels that demonstrably reach a larger portion of our residents. In Burrillville, for instance, our town website reaches at least 850 people, and we have a local periodical delivered via US Mail to every household and business weekly. This far exceeds the reach of traditional newspapers.

The intent of public notice laws is to inform as many residents as possible. Restricting notices to newspapers with limited local readership undermines that goal. By adopting H7370, the General Assembly will empower municipalities to use platforms that are accessible, cost-effective, and widely read by our communities. Fundamentally it's about enhancing civic engagement, improving public access to government information, and giving small towns the flexibility to make cost-effective decisions that truly serve their communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee and the General Assembly to support House Bill H7370 and any Senate companion legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Vicki T. Martin, CMC

Town Clerk



Town of Burrillville

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www.burrillville.org M – W 8:30 – 4:30, Th 8:30 – 7:00, F 8:30 – 12:30