



MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

March 17, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I am writing this letter in opposition to House Bill 8027, *An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Actions by and Against Towns*. If enacted, this legislation would require a municipality to disclose on their official website the specific issues, details and costs of any legal action of which the town or city is a named defendant within sixty (60) days after the close of their fiscal year.

House Bill 8027 would significantly increase litigation costs for cities and towns, while also fostering an inequitable legal environment. Under the provisions of the bill, municipalities would be the only parties in lawsuits required to publicly disclose certain information, creating an imbalance. Individuals who have filed or are considering lawsuits against a city would gain access to potentially sensitive information, which could be leveraged in their efforts to extract financial settlements from those cities and towns.

Moreover, this bill imposes an unfunded mandate, necessitating considerable employee time and resources to ensure compliance. In many cases, municipalities enter into cost-sharing agreements for joint lawsuits or utilize outside counsel to mitigate conflicts of interest. However, these collaborative arrangements would be severely impacted by the financial burdens imposed by this legislation, potentially altering the ability of cities and towns to manage legal matters efficiently.

Given the significant challenges with this bill, I respectfully urge the committee to vote no House Bill 8027.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Dana".

Jeff Dana
City Solicitor