



March 17, 2026

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

RE: HOUSE BILL 8027– AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ACTIONS BY AND AGAINST TOWNS

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns and the municipalities we represent, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on House Bill 8027. We would like to thank the sponsor for their willingness to work with stakeholders and for addressing several of the concerns that municipalities previously raised regarding earlier versions of this proposal.

In particular, we appreciate the revisions clarifying those certain financial disclosures, such as the breakdown of litigation-related costs including court costs, expert witness fees, and damages, are to be reported only upon the conclusion of a civil action. This change helps alleviate some of the concerns raised by municipalities regarding the disclosure of sensitive litigation-related information before a matter has been resolved.

However, the League continues to have concerns regarding provisions that require municipalities to disclose information about civil actions that have been filed during the year but remain ongoing. While we understand and respect the goal of transparency, requiring municipalities to report details about active litigation may inadvertently place cities and towns at a disadvantage by revealing information related to ongoing legal matters. Municipalities have a responsibility to protect taxpayer resources while defending or resolving litigation, and disclosures made during the course of a case could potentially impact legal strategy or negotiations.

Additionally, the bill requires municipalities to provide a “short description of the legal claims asserted” in each case but does not specify who is responsible for preparing these summaries or how disputes regarding their characterization might be addressed. Without clearer guidance, municipalities may face challenges in ensuring that these descriptions are accurate, consistent, and appropriately limited to publicly available information.

Finally, the requirement to report the amount of legal fees incurred in connection with an ongoing civil action raises similar concerns. Requiring real-time disclosure of litigation-related expenditures while a case is pending could provide insight into municipal legal strategy and may unintentionally disadvantage municipalities in active litigation.

The League strongly supports transparency and accountability in municipal government. At the same time, we believe that these goals can be achieved while ensuring municipalities are not placed at a disadvantage in ongoing legal proceedings. For that reason, we respectfully suggest that the disclosure requirements be limited to civil actions that have concluded during the reporting period.

We appreciate the sponsor's willingness to engage with municipalities on this issue and thank you for considering our concerns. The League remains available to work with the sponsor to identify amendments that balance transparency with the practical and legal realities faced by cities and towns.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns.

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 Municipal Government and Housing