



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, *Secretary of State*

February 29, 2024

Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair
House Committee on State Government and Elections

RE: In support of H7475 - An Act Relating to Libraries – State Library

Dear Chair Shanley,

I write this letter in support of House Bill 7475, legislation that will modernize the State Library and State Clearinghouse laws by using current terminology and best practices that appropriately reflect the roles and functions of the State Librarian and Clearinghouse Director.

As Secretary of State, a top priority has been to make government more accessible and transparent for all Rhode Islanders, which supports civic engagement. Last year, the General Assembly passed legislation that would allow for the digital publication of the Government Owner's Manual – an online directory of government information that would be more easily accessible to the public and practical enough for our office to keep updated in a consistent manner. Additionally, we continue to produce and provide printed copies of the Government Owner's Manual to government offices, members of the press, and the public and to retain them for archival purposes.

Due to the increasing number of government publications being born digitally or published exclusively digitally, it is important that the State Library statute reflect the need to preserve all its print and digital materials. For this reason, the State Library uses a digital preservation software to ensure long-term conservation, which provides other libraries and the public access to these materials. Therefore, libraries are easily able to point to the State Library catalog or provide links to their holdings, eliminating the issue of exclusively print collections.

I urge this committee to support House Bill 7475, as it will ensure that our Office can respond to the needs of the state and public by aligning with current best practices allowing flexibility for growth with ever-emerging technology and providing equitable access points to government information.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at marias@sos.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
The Honorable Lauren H. Carson

State House, Room 218, Providence, RI 02903

Phone: 401-222-2357 | Fax: 401-222-1356 | secretaryamore@sos.ri.gov | www.sos.ri.gov