



RHODE ISLAND SUPREME COURT

Office of General Counsel

Licht Judicial Complex

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March 14, 2024

Via Electronic Mail (HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov)

Chairman Evan P. Shanley

House Committee on State Government and Elections

Rhode Island State House

Room 101

Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill #7758: An Act Relating to Public Records - Access to Public Records

Dear Chairman Shanley:

I write on behalf of the Rhode Island Judiciary to express our support for House Bill H7758, scheduled to be heard and considered this evening before the House Committee on State Government and Elections. If enacted, this bill would amend the "Access to Public Records Act", RIGL § 38-2-2(4)(A)(I)(b) to exempt from public disclosure records identifying the city or town where a member of the Judiciary resides.

The Access to Public Records Act already exempts from disclosure the city or town where law enforcement officers reside. The Judiciary respectfully requests that Judicial officers be added to this exemption.

In recent years threats against judicial officers have increased significantly. In 2019, the U.S. Marshalls reported 373 threats against America's 2,700 federal judges; by 2022, that number more than tripled to 1,362. This is just on the federal level. In Rhode Island, judges and magistrates have been served with lawsuits at their homes, received threatening mail, and even had pictures of their homes posted online. Violence against judges is on the rise, with statistics confirming acts of violence usually take place at the judge's home, not the courthouse.

In an effort to provide a measure of protection for judicial officers, the Rhode Island Judiciary requests that RIGL § 38-2-2(4)(A)(I)(b) be amended to exempt from disclosure the city or town where a judge or magistrate resides. Thank you for the opportunity to express the Judiciary's support for this bill.

Sincerely,


Kathleen Kelly
General Counsel