



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, Secretary of State

March 6, 2025

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

RE: In support of House Bill 5451 – An Act Relating to Public Records – Public Records Administration

Dear Chair Shanley,

I write this letter in support of House Bill 5451, legislation that will modernize the Public Records Administration and the laws outlining appropriate care of government records. This legislation updates current terminology and best practices to accurately reflect the roles and functions of the Public Records Administrator and all agencies as records custodians.

As Secretary of State, my top priority has been making government more accessible and transparent for all Rhode Islanders, which subsequently supports civic engagement. The State Archives and Public Records Administration is an indispensable tool for upholding transparency in government—it safeguards Rhode Island's historical assets and records, both permanent and temporary, which document daily government operations.

This proposed legislation will augment these values of access and transparency by enhancing collaboration between State and municipal entities under the public records program, remaining current with constantly evolving industry standards, and updating several definitions that clarify and better reflect the function and importance of records management. Additionally, this legislation clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Public Records Administrator, State agencies, and public bodies in the creation and maintenance of public records.

Furthermore, this legislation will improve the process for generating and updating records retention schedules based on their legal, historical, and fiscal value, as well as the process for legally destroying records. In tandem, this bill establishes a clearer mechanism to transfer records that exhibit historical value to the State Archives for preservation upon appraisal and consultation with the State Archivist.

I urge this committee to support House Bill 5451 as it will ensure that our Office can respond to the needs of the state and public by aligning current industry best practices to enhance records administration across state and municipal government.

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 & Elections
The Honorable Earl A. Read, III

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