



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
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Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General

May 16, 2025

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chairman
House Committee on State Government and Elections
State House, Room 101
Providence, RI 02903

Re: HB 5451: Public Records Administration

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee,

I write today to express my support for HB 5451, sponsored by Representative Earl Read, legislation that would modernize and improve the Public Records Administration Act.

As you know, my Office is committed to promoting an open and transparent government, as evidenced by the incredible work done by the Open Government Unit. As Attorney General, and a lifelong Rhode Islander, I value a government that remains transparent and accountable for all Rhode Islanders, and this legislation represents a necessary step in ensuring that public records are properly maintained and accessible.

The laws governing the appropriate care of government records are significantly outdated - some left untouched for over 30 years - leaving room for inefficiencies and vulnerabilities in government records retention processes. This bill updates the duties and responsibilities of the Public Records Administration and enhances its role in supporting agencies in public records management. By updating and streamlining the process for creating and updating records retention schedules, there will be clearer instruction and more efficient processes, thus improving the experience for all state and local agencies.

This legislation offers a unique opportunity to improve the records retention process and reduce administrative burden throughout the state. I applaud Secretary of State Amore for recognizing the need to streamline these outdated laws and systems that govern records retention, and my Office supports these efforts.

For these reasons, I support this legislation submitted on behalf of the Secretary of State's Office and appreciate the Committee's consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General