



**RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE
OF CITIES AND TOWNS**

*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

March 6, 2025

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair
House State Government and Elections
Rhode Island House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-5451 – RELATING TO PUBLIC RECORDS -- PUBLIC RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Chair Shanley and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns and our affiliate members, the Rhode Island Town & City Clerks' Association (RITCCA), I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 5451, which seeks to modernize the Public Records Administration Act by establishing a public records administrator, updating definitions, improving records retention procedures, and enhancing public access to government records.

Transparency, accountability, and efficiency are core tenets of good governance, and this legislation represents a necessary step forward in ensuring that public records are properly maintained, preserved, and accessible for future generations. By clarifying definitions and incorporating electronic record-keeping best practices, House Bill 5451 aligns Rhode Island's public records management with modern standards while protecting historical and governmental documents.

The bill's provisions for a records control schedule, the designation of a records officer, and the mandatory transfer of records to the state archives after twenty years will provide consistency and clarity for municipal clerks and public agencies. Additionally, the establishment of a dedicated research room and the requirement for annual reporting by the public records administrator will strengthen public access to government records while ensuring proper oversight.

We would like to extend our thanks to Representative Read for sponsoring this important legislation and to the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Office for their leadership and collaboration in improving public records management. Their efforts to enhance transparency and efficiency in government are greatly appreciated.

The Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, in collaboration with RITCCA, supports this legislation as a critical measure to enhance the efficiency and integrity of public records management across the state. We urge you and your colleagues to support House Bill 5451 to ensure Rhode Island continues its commitment to open government and responsible records stewardship.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House State Government and Elections Committee
The Honorable Earl Read