



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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Office of the Director

Kimberly Merolla-Brito

March 6, 2025

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley,
Chair, House Committee on State Government and Elections
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 5723 -- An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – State Owned and Operated Printing Facilities Preference Act

Dear Chair Shanley:

I am writing to you regarding House Bill 5723, which would require any state agency, state institution of higher education, or quasi-public agency to use a state-operated printer for various materials when printing more than 50 copies. I would like to provide additional context on the Rhode Island Department of Human Services' (DHS) printing processes and operational needs to assist the committee as it reviews this legislation.

DHS already prioritizes state-operated printing service whenever feasible. The department prints notices internally and also uses the print shop operated by the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) for its printing needs when DHS cannot print promotional materials in-house. DHS values the services provided by RIDOH, though there are occasions where flexibility is needed, and external vendors are used due to operational or creative constraints. While RIDOH permits its sister agencies to utilize its print shop, it has also expressed concerns in its letter to this committee about its ability to sustain this practice if the bill passes.

Operational initiatives, urgent requests, or unique service needs may require the use of a vendor through Master Price Agreements or Request for Proposals. For example, DHS created various materials to support initiatives related to document scanning centers, fraud prevention resources, and SNAP Eat Well, Be Well. These materials could not be created by state-operated printers because of limitations in the area of producing large-size laminated posters, glossy palm cards, and brochures. DHS defaults to state-operated printers for materials whenever possible, but will also use the most competitive bid from a vendor when an issues arises in getting materials out to the community as quickly as possible.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions about DHS's printing preferences and operations. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Merolla-Brito

Kimberly Merolla-Brito
Director
RI Department of Human Service

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
The Honorable Kathleen A. Fogarty
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker of the House of Representatives
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy