



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, Secretary of State

March 13, 2025

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

RE: In opposition to H5875 – An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – The Rhode Island Lobbying Reform Act

Dear Chair Shanley,

I write this letter in opposition to House Bill 5875, legislation that would expand the Lobbying Reform Act to apply to persons who lobby municipal executive and legislative government bodies and local fire districts.

If this legislation were to move forward, amendments to the registration and reporting sections of the Rhode Island Lobbying Reform Act and the promulgated rules and regulations would also need to be amended.

Moreover, because cities and towns meet year-round, the current reporting structure would need to be changed to monthly reporting for all lobbyists. Currently, monthly reports are required from January-June, and quarterly reports from July-December. Furthermore, since this bill is inexplicit in the role and responsibilities of lobbyists at the municipal and fire district levels, it would prove challenging for the Department to monitor and enforce this legislation. The Department of State would additionally need further clarification on the specific reportable activities for lobbying a local fire district.

In addition, the Department would need to make extensive – and potentially costly – changes to the Lobby Registration Desk, the platform it uses for the current lobbyist registry. Almost every aspect of this platform will need to be updated to conform with this legislation's parameters, and it will require significant time and resources for the Department to implement. With that being said, the Department would need a substantial appropriation to update and rebuild the capacity of the Lobby Registration Desk system in its entirety.

I urge the Members of the Committee to consider our above-mentioned concerns regarding House Bill 5875 and oppose this legislation. However, should the Committee decide to move forward with this legislation, we ask that the effective date of this bill be July 1, 2026, and appropriate funding. We are happy to have a further conversation with the sponsor about these concerns.

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 and Elections
The Honorable Paul Santucci