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ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

TESTIMONY ON 25-H 5523, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT – OPEN MEETINGS April 22, 2025

Accessibility to open meetings is a critical component of transparent government. As such, we are supportive of this legislation which would bolster such accessibility by requiring a “translation assistance plan” for all public bodies.

This bill importantly acknowledges that residents in the state of Rhode Island, who are all affected by the events at public meetings, face different levels of accessibility to these meetings dependent on their unique language abilities. Ensuring more robust translation services – including for those who are deaf or hard of hearing – helps ensure that opportunities for participation are not limited only to those residents who speak and easily comprehend the language that the meeting is conducted in.

This legislation is a good piece of public policy that promotes government transparency and recognizes the multilingual makeup of Rhode Island’s diverse population. We support its passage.

Thank you for your consideration.