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ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

**TESTIMONY ON 26-H 7580,
RELATING TO ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS
March 31, 2026**

The ACLU of Rhode Island supports this legislation, which would provide that public records stored in a computer system be provided at no charge upon request.

Also pending before this committee is comprehensive APRA reform legislation, H-7305, that would, among other things, significantly reduce the ability of public bodies to charge excessive fees for the public's access to what are, at heart, the public's own records. In the same spirit, but with a narrower focus, this legislation also seeks to make government records more accessible.

The time that needs to be spent responding to an open records request that is readily available electronically is minuscule. There are no copying costs or major labor costs involved in providing such records electronically, and complying with requests for such records should not be a money-making venture for public bodies.

In order to better serve the public's right to know, the ACLU of RI therefore supports this legislation.