



**RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE  
OF CITIES AND TOWNS**

*Distinctive Communities  
Powerful Alliance*

March 31, 2026

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

**RE: HOUSE BILL 7985 – AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC RECORDS -- ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS**

Chair Shanley and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns and our 39 member municipalities, we write to express support for House Bill 7985.

This legislation represents a thoughtful and practical step toward strengthening the administration of the Access to Public Records Act (APRA) at the local level. In particular, the bill's requirement that public records requests include sufficient identifying information, such as a name and valid contact information, provides an important safeguard for municipalities in managing requests efficiently and responsibly.

Municipalities across Rhode Island are committed to transparency and timely public access to records. However, in practice, anonymous requests can at times contribute to challenges, including the submission of duplicative, overly broad, or bad-faith requests that strain limited municipal resources. By establishing a basic standard for requester identification, House Bill 7985 helps protect against misuse of the system while still preserving the public's right to access information. This added accountability allows municipal staff to communicate directly with requesters to clarify scope, reduce unnecessary delays, and ultimately improve responsiveness.

At the same time, we respectfully note the importance of careful implementation of these provisions. As this proposal represents a shift from current APRA practices, it will be important to ensure clear guidance for municipalities so that local policies, procedures, and staff training are aligned with the updated requirements. Additionally, consideration should be given to how these changes interact with existing APRA provisions. Thoughtful alignment will help avoid confusion and ensure consistent application across all public bodies.

The League appreciates the sponsor's efforts to address the operational realities faced by municipalities while maintaining a commitment to transparency and public trust. We look forward to continued collaboration as this legislation moves through the process and to working with stakeholders to ensure its effective and balanced implementation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our perspective.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi  
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House State Government and Elections Committee