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**ACLU OF RI POSITION: AMEND**

**TESTIMONY ON 26-S 2686,  
AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE OFFICE OF  
THE ELDER ADVOCATE  
April 7, 2026**

The ACLU of Rhode Island has no position on the substance of this bill establishing an office of the elder advocate. However, we do wish to suggest a minor amendment to address an ambiguity dealing with the confidentiality of information that would be maintained by this office.

Language on Page 3, lines 24-30, addresses the confidentiality of records of individuals who seek assistance from the office. The ACLU agrees that any information that would identify those individuals should be confidential, and available only to the person involved, any person they authorize access to the records, and “for good cause shown by the family court.” However, the wording of subsection (a) suggests that even de-identified records of the office pertaining to its constituent work might also be deemed completely confidential. This is in tension with subsection (b) which more appropriately focuses on protecting the confidentiality of records that would specifically identify individuals.

To avoid confusion, and to ensure that the public is not barred from obtaining documents that might shed light on the office’s activities that do not invade individual privacy, we would urge an amendment to subsection (a) to clarify that it applies only to records that might be identifiable to individuals seeking assistance from the office.

Thank you for your attention to our views.