



April 2, 2026
The Honorable Matthew LaMountain
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: SENATE BILL 3041 – AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT –
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' DUE PROCESS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND TRANSPARENCY
ACT

Dear Chair, LaMountain and Senate Committee Members,

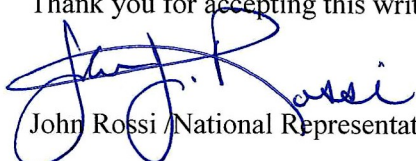
On behalf of the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, which represents the interests of law enforcement officers in 27 out of the 39 cities and towns across the state, this written testimony expresses support for Senate Bill 3041, which proposes amendments to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-28.6-1 of the Law Enforcement Officers' Due Process, Accountability, and Transparency Act (LEODPATDA).

The bill addresses an important oversight in the current law by limiting the routine appointment of legal counsel to assist hearing committees. Prior to July 2025, hearing committees consisted solely of three police officers, who occasionally required legal counsel to navigate substantive legal issues. Under the previous structure of the hearing committee with three police officers, the appointment of legal counsel was rare. Dating back to 1975 the historical data from approximately 100 hearings conducted between 1975 and 2025 indicates that counsel was appointed in only two instances. In those two cases the legal counsel's role was limited to addressing specific legal questions.

Last year when the law was amended the hearing committee was expanded to include a retired judge and a practicing attorney as members of the five-person hearing committee. The appointment of additional legal counsel has become routine. The additional legal counsel participates in hearings for the entire process. This has created unanticipated costs for both municipalities and police officers, with a legal bill in one case exceeding \$40,000. These expenses were neither anticipated nor are they sustainable for the parties involved.

Senate Bill 3041 preserves the ability to appoint legal counsel for the hearing committee, but only upon written application by both the law enforcement agency and the accused officer, and at the discretion of the chairperson. In such cases, the law enforcement agency and the officer would each be responsible for 50% of the legal fees unless otherwise agreed. This change ensures that counsel is available when genuinely needed while preventing automatic, high-cost appointments that offer little additional value, given the presence of a judge and attorney on the committee. This amendment balances fairness, due process, and transparency in disciplinary hearings, while protecting municipal resources and preventing unanticipated financial burdens for officers.

Thank you for accepting this written testimony regarding Senate House Bill 3041.


John Rossi National Representative