



April 2, 2026

The Honorable Senator Matthew L. 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

Chair LaMountain and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, representing all 39 municipalities across the state, we offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 3041, which proposes amendments to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-28.6-1 under the Law Enforcement Officers' Due Process, Accountability, and Transparency Act (LEODPATDA).

This legislation responds to practical challenges that have emerged under the current statutory framework, particularly regarding the expanded and increasingly routine use of outside legal counsel to assist hearing committees. Prior to the July 2025 amendments, hearing panels operated effectively with limited reliance on outside counsel, which was used only in rare instances to address discrete legal questions.

Following recent structural changes to the composition of hearing committees, the involvement of additional legal counsel has become significantly more frequent. While we recognize and appreciate the Judiciary's perspective on the value that counsel can provide in supporting these proceedings, this increased reliance has, in practice, led to substantial and often unanticipated costs for both municipalities and individual officers. In some cases, these expenses have reached levels that raise concerns about long-term sustainability and equitable access to the process.

Senate Bill 3041 maintains the availability of legal counsel but introduces reasonable guardrails to ensure its use is more closely aligned with demonstrated need. By requiring a written request from both the law enforcement agency and the officer, the bill encourages a more deliberate and case-specific determination of when counsel is appropriate. This approach is not intended to diminish the role of legal expertise, but rather to ensure that its use is targeted, necessary, and proportionate to the circumstances of each case.

We also acknowledge the operational considerations raised regarding the administrative and procedural support that counsel can provide. We believe these concerns can be addressed through thoughtful implementation and continued coordination among stakeholders, without maintaining a structure that may result in the routine or duplicative appointment of counsel given the existing legal and judicial presence on the panel.

Ultimately, this legislation reflects a balanced approach, one that preserves due process and transparency while promoting fiscal responsibility and fairness for all parties involved. By refining when and how legal counsel is engaged, Senate Bill 3041 helps ensure the integrity of the LEODPATDA process while safeguarding municipal resources and minimizing unintended financial burdens.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and for the opportunity to provide input on behalf of Rhode Island's cities and towns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi  
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of Senate Judiciary Committee