



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, Secretary of State

April 4, 2024

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr., Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

RE: In support of H7830 – An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Department of Attorney General

Dear Chair Craven,

I write this letter in support of House Bill 7830, legislation that will allow the Rhode Island Attorney General's office, on behalf of the State, to investigate and enforce action against persistent fraud or illegality during a business transaction or government activity.

The Department of State's Business Services Division maintains Rhode Island's business registry, which records new business formations and the ongoing business registration activity of the more than 101,920 active entities registered in our state. The Division also provides thoughtful guidance and comprehensive services to those looking to start and maintain a business or non-profit in Rhode Island.

Our office has seen an uptick in reported business identity theft and misrepresentation claims surrounding the misuse of a residential address filed under an entity's registered agent. These circumstances have put victims in a predicament, as currently, there is no private right of action in which consumers can defend themselves against these bad actors, nor can they seek financial compensation for the damages incurred during a fraudulent scheme of this scale.

The emerging use of modern technologies has benefited society but has also attracted fraudsters and criminals to misuse the technology to propagate fraudulent and illegal actions. This legislation will be a great avenue to catch this fraudulent behavior and will ultimately help consumers obtain the justice they deserve.

Our office has been in communication with the Office of the Attorney General, with a slight recommendation to expand this legislation to include all business formations and entity types by virtue of the provision of the Rhode Island General Laws under Title 7, Chapters 1.2, 5.1, 5.3, 6, 6.1, 6.2, 7, 8, 12.1, 13.1, and 16.

With this recommended addition, I urge the Members of the Committee and the full House to support House Bill 7830, as it will ensure consumers have the protection they need against fraudulent behavior.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at marias@sos.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
The Honorable David Morales

State House, Room 218, Providence, RI 02903

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