

2025 -- H 5457

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC RECORDS -- ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS

Introduced By: Representatives Azzinaro, Finkelman, Fellela, Serpa, McNamara,
Kennedy, and Hull

Date Introduced: February 12, 2025

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 38-2-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 38-2 entitled "Access to Public
2 Records" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **38-2-4. Cost.**

4 (a) Subject to the provisions of § 38-2-3, a public body must allow copies to be made or
5 provide copies of public records. The cost per copied page of written documents provided to the
6 public shall not exceed fifteen cents (\$.15) per page for documents copyable on common business
7 or legal-size paper. A public body may not charge more than the reasonable actual cost for
8 providing electronic records or retrieving records from storage where the public body is assessed a
9 retrieval fee.

10 (b) A reasonable charge may be made for the search or retrieval of documents. Hourly costs
11 for a search and retrieval shall not exceed ~~fifteen dollars (\$15.00)~~ twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per
12 hour and no costs shall be charged for the first hour of a search or retrieval. For the purposes of this
13 subsection, multiple requests from any person or entity to the same public body within a thirty (30)
14 day time period shall be considered one request.

15 (c) Copies of documents shall be provided and the search and retrieval of documents
16 accomplished within a reasonable time after a request. A public body upon request, shall provide
17 an estimate of the costs of a request for documents prior to providing copies.

18 (d) Upon request, the public body shall provide a detailed itemization of the costs charged
19 for search and retrieval.

1 (e) A court may reduce or waive the fees for costs charged for search or retrieval if it
2 determines that the information requested is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute
3 significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not
4 primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

5 [\(f\) Any person requesting a document under § 38-2-3 shall pay any outstanding balance](#)
6 [owed for prior records requests before a new request will be processed.](#)

7 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would allow a reasonable charge not to exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) to be
2 charged for the search or retrieval of documents. This act would also require a member of the public
3 to pay any outstanding balances due and owing for previous requests before being provided copies
4 of records and documents on a new request from law enforcement agencies.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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