



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20580

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Federal Trade Commission  
Washington, DC 20580

Department Of Justice  
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Gordon D. Fox  
Majority Leader of the House of Representatives  
Majority Leader's Office  
State House  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

We understand that the Rhode Island House of Representatives is considering two bills that would amend the definition of "practice of law" to require lawyers to represent buyers in virtually all aspects of the real estate closing process. These bills are H.5936 and H.5639, both entitled, "An Act Relating To Criminal Offenses - Law Practice."

Both bills are very similar to H.7462, considered by the House of Representatives last year. The Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission urged the House to reject that bill because it would have restrained competition between lawyers and nonlawyers for real estate closing business, likely resulting in increased costs for Rhode Island consumers. The current bills raise many of the same concerns as H.7462 did. Accordingly, we urge the General Assembly to reject the current legislation for the reasons stated in our March 29, 2002 letter.<sup>(1)</sup> A copy of our 2002 letter is attached.

Sincerely yours,

R. Hewitt Pate  
Acting Assistant Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice

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