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**ACLU OF RI POSITION: OPPOSE**

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO 21-H 5869,  
AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS  
April 13, 2021**

The ACLU of Rhode Island opposes this bill, which would allow law enforcement officers to obtain from telecommunication companies the names, addresses and phone numbers of individuals whose information is nonpublished.

Under current law, a variety of state law enforcement officials, as well as the chief of every police department, already have the authority to obtain this information as part of a certified investigation. In light of the privacy interests at stake, we believe it should stay that way. There is no reason to exponentially expand the number of police officers who can obtain this information without any judicial intervention when they can go through their police chief instead. The potential for abuse of this authority is too great.

We also can't help but point out that this power to obtain private contact information is being sought even as law enforcement officers have been pressing for the passage of privacy-protective legislation for themselves, designed to keep secret even *the name of the municipality* where *they* reside. See 21-H 5417.

The statute presently strikes the proper balance between the needs of law enforcement and the privacy rights of Rhode Islanders. We urge rejection of this bill, which would upset that balance.