



Rhode Island Supreme Court Addresses Non-Lawyer Closings

The Rhode Island Supreme Court is considering the role of the attorney, and non-attorney, in the closing process, in response to complaints registered with the state's Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee. These complaints alleged that various non-lawyer parties had engaged in the unauthorized practice of law by conducting closings. The Committee determined that the parties had in fact engaged in the unauthorized practice of law, and recommended that the Court find that conducting a real estate transaction represents the practice of law.

At the oral arguments held by the Supreme Court on December 5, 2019, the Rhode Island Bar Association argued that lawyers are best equipped to handle potential pitfalls involving matters such as taxation, easements, probate issues, and environmental concerns. Opposing arguments were presented in a brief submitted by the United States Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission, who asserted that banning non-lawyers would reduce competition and harm customers.

An amicus brief was filed by John Comery, Vice President and Manager of CATIC's Rhode Island office. CATIC was the only title company to submit an amicus brief.

We will keep you apprised of any new developments on this matter.

[Click here](#) to read a Providence Journal article on the Supreme Court hearing.