

April 21, 2025

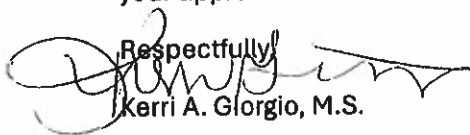
Honorable Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Kerri Giorgio, and I have been an employee of the RI Department of Corrections for the past 30 years. I currently hold the position of a Probation and Parole Officer. I supervise a parole specific (offenders still serving their prison sentences in the community) caseload which requires an abundance of emotional, mental and physical tasks. All these tasks need to be done to ensure the public is safe.

Some may say, you get what you signed up for and with me that is not the case. I began my career at a very young age. During my 30 years of working for the Probation and Parole Department, I obtained both a bachelor's and master's degree in criminal justice, raised two children and performed my duties as required. The duties in which I need to perform daily impact my personal life emotionally, mentally and physically. They also affect my family to whom I go home to daily. Does the community want a 60-year-old trucking up three flights of stairs to conduct home visits on parolees, does the community want a 60-year-old making sound decisions on one's liberty. Come to work with me for a few days, heck maybe even one and you will see what grueling tasks we do daily. I get you can't paint all with the same brush, but I am speaking of myself and what I have endured the past 30 years working in this demanding job to protect the community and serve the State of Rhode Island taxpayers to which I have been tasked with.

Let me elaborate some more. Sitting daily working with offenders who are dangerous and trying to get them to "buy in" to changing their behaviors and their way of life is exhausting. Attempting to put together plans and then gaining the resources which is far and few, to counseling them on imminent issues to name the least takes a tremendous toll on one's mental capacity. The emotional stories that are to be had with the offenders: why did you physical/sexually abuse, murder, assault, why did you have a gun in your possession, where did you get it, why did you join the gang, how can you get out without getting killed and so forth. Do this for years and see how emotionally and mentally exhausted you become. Now, let's talk about the physical aspect. One must be able to move quickly and out of the way if needed. When an offender gets in your space and tries to overcome you, when you go to an offender's home and don't know who is in the home and what they may have resulting in potentially making a mad dash. How about climbing flights and flights of stairs to gain entry to the home. We need to be protecting the community and with this, we need to be emotionally, mentally and physically capable. There is a time when we can't do it anymore but are forced to due to current retirement classifications. This is a disservice to the State of Rhode Island taxpayers who pay to have a sense of security in the state they reside. I know I have been here 30 years and by pension standards need to work another 8 years. Well, I can't imagine continuing to do what needs to be done to protect the community or myself for that matter for another 8 years.

We ARE public safety employees and need to be seen as such. With that being said, I am urging your approval of HB 5765.

Respectfully,

Kerri A. Giorgio, M.S.