

## Chris O'Brien

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**From:** Matt Golding <matthewsgolding@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 22, 2025 12:14 PM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** MERS, Probation and Parole

Good afternoon, Rep O'Brien

My name is Matthew Golding and I currently work as a parole officer for the RI Department of Corrections, a job I have held since 2018. I work and live in Cranston.

I am writing to you in an attempt to fully express my strong support for the inclusion of RIDOC into the Municipal Employees Retirement System.

Probation and Parole Officers play a vital role in maintaining public safety throughout the state of Rhode Island. Much like police officers and correctional officers, who already qualify for MERS, POs perform critical public safety functions.

Our duties include transporting individuals upon release from the ACI, background investigations on DOC employees, pre-release investigation on in-state ACI releases as well as out-of-state defendants, provide progress reports to district and superior court, supervising probationers and parolees in the community, and connecting probationers and parolees with resources to support their rehabilitation efforts.

These responsibilities demand both physical and emotional resilience. While the work can be deeply rewarding, it also places officers at risk for burnout, stress-related health issues, and early retirement. Despite the similarities in scope and risk to other public safety employees, probation and parole officers are not currently afforded the same retirement benefits.

Extending MERS eligibility to our department would align Rhode Island with neighboring states like Massachusetts and Connecticut, which already recognize the high-risk nature of probation and parole work. It would also enhance recruitment, retention, and the overall stability of our department for years to come.

I respectfully urge the House Finance Committee to support legislation or budget provisions that would allow probation and parole officers to access MERS.

Thank you very much for your time,

Matthew Golding