

Chris O'Brien

From: Garro, Michele (DOC) <Michele.Garro@doc.ri.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 9:21 AM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: HB 5765

Dear Representative O'Brien,

I am writing to you regarding House Bill 5765, which would include adding Probation and Parole officers to the list of employees considered public safety professionals. The very nature of our jobs is to ensure public safety by supervising and counseling offenders who have been released into the community by either the courts or the parole board. We are tasked with ensuring compliance with court orders and violating when necessary. As probation and parole officers, we sometimes wear many hats- social worker, counselor, and law enforcement. We collaborate with other public safety personnel throughout the state on a regular basis to include police departments, correctional staff, treatment providers, judiciary staff, and DCYF just to name a few. We are dealing with the very same population of people that correctional officers and law enforcement manage. It is a common occurrence for someone who was incarcerated and released from the ACI to be sitting at my desk later the same day. We have direct contact with individuals who have histories of violent charges, mental health concerns, and substance abuse issues. We conduct community or home visits, which can sometimes be unpredictable and/or volatile. We have high caseloads which can lead to burnout over time. For these reasons, it is so very important and critical that we be recognized as public safety professionals.

Thank you for your time.

Michele Garro

Adult Probation and Parole Officer- 24 years in Corrections