

April 7, 2026

To: House Finance Committee

RE: Support for House Resolution No. 8207 – Appropriation for RI Commission on Prejudice & Bias

Dear Committee Members,

Rhode Island General Law 42-80-2 established the Commission on Prejudice and Bias (the RICPB) in 1981 to study prejudice, bias, and hatred in Rhode Island in order to revise and codify all laws relating to prejudice, bias, and hatred. This diverse 17-member commission includes state legislators, gubernatorial-appointed community leaders, Attorney General-appointed members, and law enforcement representatives, and is a prominent and necessary channel of communication between legislators, law enforcement, and the communities they are sworn to serve and protect. I know this first hand as I was the first coordinator of the commission, back when we began and for the following 30 years.

The commission's Hate Crime Training Program provides training mandated by Rhode Island General Law 42-28.2 for all law enforcement academies, as well as police departments, victim's advocates, and community groups. These trainings support compliance with RI General Law 42-28-46, which mandates the reporting of hate crimes. The Commission was previously funded through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and the RI Public Safety Grants Administration Byrne Bureau of Justice Assistance (JAG) grant, both of which have been cut. The RICPB's federal Shepherd/Byrd Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant will terminate on 9/30, leaving the Commission with zero funding.

The commission receives reports of hate crimes and incidents from Rhode Islanders and directs victims to resources, while advising police departments and the Office of the Attorney General where appropriate. The commission provides guidance to the Governor, Attorney General, and legislature on critical laws and policies related to prejudice and bias. The commission conducts and participates in community education events around the state, and serves as a resource for first responders.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me for any additional information.

Sincerely,

Jodi L. Glass, Au.D. (she/her) Doctor of Audiology/ Community Activist

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