



April 9, 2026  
Written Testimony for Public Hearing  
House Finance Committee  
Re: Testimony in Favor of H 8207

Chair Abney and committee members.

**The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island strongly supports H 8207** which appropriates \$100,000 to the Rhode Island Commission on Prejudice and Bias, ensuring that Rhode Island is better poised to combat bias and hate.

Rhode Island General Law 42-80-2 established the Commission on Prejudice and Bias (the commission) 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. The 17-member commission includes state legislators, gubernatorial-appointed community leaders, Attorney General-appointed members, and law enforcement representatives. It is a prominent and necessary channel of communication between legislators, law enforcement, and the communities they are sworn to serve and protect.

The Jewish Alliance works with the commission, and we appreciate and understand its invaluable impact on not only our community, but all of Rhode Island. We are witnessing a striking rise in antisemitism and other forms of hate, making the work of the commission even more important.

The Commission on Prejudice and Bias 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. It also conducts and participates in community education events around the state and serves as a resource for first responders.

Mandated by Rhode Island General Law 42-28.2, the commission's Hate Crime Training Program provides training 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. Trainings have been operating without funding since October 1, 2024 and can no longer be expected to fulfill the demands of these laws.

The commission had successfully operated through grants from the Victims of Crime Act, the United States Bureau of Justice Assistance, the RI Department of Administration, and the RI Public Safety Grants Administration. The need for the commission's work has expanded, and these funding streams no longer enable the execution of the commission's mission statement.

The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for the approximately 20,000 Jews in our state, as well as the broader Rhode Island community. Together, we bring Jewish tradition and values to life through meaningful action. Our work is guided by core principles, including Tikkun Olam, repairing the world, and Hineni, standing with others so no one stands alone. These values inform all our work, including our support for this critical joint resolution. Now,



more than ever, the work of the Rhode Island Commission on Prejudice and Bias is imperative. We write today in support of state funding in the amount of \$100,000 to ensure continuation of the commission's work.

I urge the committee to pass this bill and allocate the appropriate funding.

Sincerely,  
Emily Gaudreau  
Director, Community Advocacy and Engagement