



April 16, 2026

House Finance Committee
House Finance State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Respected Members of Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to respectfully urge your support for **House Bill H-7865**, which would allow **Rhode Island Probation and Parole Officers & Supervisors** to be considered for MERS benefits. This recognition is not only appropriate but long overdue, considering the nature of our duties and the risks we face daily in the service of public safety.

Probation Officers and Parole Officers in this state do a remarkable job every day for the taxpayers of Rhode Island. The DOC 2025 expenditures report states Community Corrections makes up 7% of the total DOC budget. Probation and Parole is a portion of that 7%. Rhode With that small percentage we can manage the over 16,000 Probationers we oversee every day. Probation officers are in every community in this state every day. We are in people's homes, places of employment, and the community. They do this armed with a vest and sometimes OC spray. Probation Officers are well versed in de-escalation techniques and approach all probationers with a rehabilitative lens. They want the people under our care to succeed. They work with individuals who often are suffering from mental illness or substance abuse issues. They work with high-risk sex offenders and domestic violence offenders. This bill would show support for these Officers and the work they do every day.

These folks already do an unbelievable job daily keeping Rhode Islanders safe and will continue to work hard for the taxpayers of Rhode Island. The IBPO urges the passage of this bill so the Department can fulfill its goals and Officers are recognized for their law enforcement professionalism.

House Bill 7865 would provide long-needed recognition of these challenges and align our worker's compensation benefits with other public safety professionals, such as law enforcement and correctional officers, who are rightfully acknowledged for the similar demands of their roles.

I urge you to support **House Bill H-7865** and advocate for those of us who serve on the front lines of justice and rehabilitation every day.

Sincerely,

John J Rossi

John J Rossi
National Representative
IBPO

