



State of Rhode Island
Office of the General Treasurer
State House – Room 102
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Seth Magaziner
General Treasurer

March 3, 2022

Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr., Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

Re: In support of H7353- An Act Relating to Criminal Procedure – Bail and Recognizance

Dear Chair Craven,

As General Treasurer, I have focused the work of our Office on promoting economic growth for our state and its residents. I am writing to express my support for H7353, a criminal justice reform that would support financial security and public safety.

H7353 proposes to end the use of cash bail for misdemeanor cases, allowing defendants to be released on their own recognizance instead of being detained while awaiting trial if they cannot afford their bail payment. The use of a cash bail system is inherently unfair to low-income defendants. The overrepresentation of people of color in the criminal justice system makes the harm of cash bail disproportionately fall on communities of color and widens the racial wealth gap.

For defendants unable to afford to post bail for misdemeanor offenses that are later dismissed or for which they are found not guilty, the period of their detention also equates to time away from work supporting their families, reinforcing the cycle of financial harm. Keeping individuals connected to employment and their social supports reduces recidivism and promotes public safety.

Rhode Island will be a safer place to live and work if we promote the economic security of our residents. I urge the support of this Committee and the full House.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Seth Magaziner".

Seth Magaziner
General Treasurer

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker of the House
Honorable Leonela Felix