

February 7, 2024

House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
Rhode Island State House

Reference: Testimony on H7263 - OPPOSE

Chairman Craven and Honorable Committee Members:

I respectfully ask that you review and consider this testimony against H7263, which would modify Rhode Island's LEOBOR law.

Until recently, I supported modification or elimination of Rhode Island's LEOBOR. Two things have changed my mind.

The first is a new, baseless trend of anti-police sentiment. Though it is promulgated by a narrow, misguided segment of people, it threatens both public safety and police officers themselves because they are falsely assumed to have acted wrongly when there is an incident.

The second is the treatment of then-Providence Police Officer Jeann Lugo in the aftermath of the June 24, 2022 melee at the State House.

An extremely clipped, slow motion, five second video of Lugo's actions in the melee was created and released on social media. The video carefully omitted exculpatory events that preceded his alleged assault on a woman; specifically, it did not show the actions of Lugo's alleged victim, Jennifer Rourke, repeatedly pulling on Lugo and impeding him from protecting a victim of assault. In short, the video was a lie.

On the basis of a lie, this video that falsely portrayed him as assaulting a woman without provocation, Lugo was quickly suspended by the Providence Police Department and then criminally charged. Only LEOBOR and, eventually, a level-headed judge, salvaged Jeann Lugo's job and preserved his innocence in the face of the criminal charges.

Accordingly, I would respectfully ask that the committee vote Nay on H7263 and any other rescission or modification of LEOBOR that may come before you.

Thank you for your consideration. Below is my phone number should you have any questions.



Monique Chartier
Wakefield, RI
401-261-0508