

Roberta DiMezza

From: Barbara Gianola <barbgianola@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 17, 2024 8:27 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: In Support of H7307 and in Opposition to H7165 Atten: Roberta DiMezza

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Please add my written remarks to hearing documents, thank you - B. Gianola

As a Rhode Island Licensed Clinical Social Worker (RET) I often worked with people in situations of vulnerability who were afraid to approach social supports because of the statutory illegality of their situations.

I have seen women who were beaten, robbed, abused, who first presented to us as social workers because they feared going to what we would assume to be first responders including police and hospitals, due to fear of being arrested themselves. We as helping professionals can't provide assistance and treatment if fear blocks people in need from accessing treatment and support.

Please understand the complexity of marginalized lives and the desperation of people in fear of asking for help.

Any serious attempt to promote public safety or end sex trafficking must include allowing ALL sex workers, sex trafficking survivors, and their clients (who are first responders in most cases of sex trafficking) to report violence without being charged with prostitution or massaging without a license.

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