

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Jen Lamoureux <jenlamoureux@proton.me>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2025 12:29 PM  
**To:** Rep. Ajello, Edith H.; Rep. Cruz, Cherie L.; Rep. Felix, Leonela; Rep. Tanzi, Teresa A.; Rep. Craven, Robert E.; Rep. Shallcross Smith, Mary Ann; Rep. Speakman, June; Rep. Boylan, Jennifer; Rep. McGaw, Michelle E.; Rep. Furtado, Jenni Azanero; Rep. McEntee, Carol Hagan; Rep. Corvese, Arthur J.; Rep. Knight, Jason; Rep. Bennett, David A.; Rep. Batista, Jose F.; Rep. Caldwell, Justine A.; Rep. Dawson, Matthew S.; Rep. Hopkins, Marie A.; Rep. Noret, Thomas E.; Rep. Place, David J.; House Judiciary Committee; SLegislation; Sen. Raptakis, Leonidas P.; Sen. Quezada, Ana B; Sen. Bissaillon, Jacob E.; Sen. Dimitri, Andrew R.; Sen. LaMountain, Matthew L.; Sen. Murray, Melissa A.; Sen. McKenney, Mark P.; Sen. Pearson, Ryan W.; Sen. Acosta, Jonathon; Sen. Burke, John P.; coyote.rhodeisland@gmail.com; shekarchi@rilegislature.gov  
**Subject:** Please Oppose Bill H5358  
  
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February 25, 2025

Dear Representatives

I am writing you today in opposition to bill H5358. There is clear and vast public support for an immunity bill that will actually serve and support Rhode island sex workers, not one that can so clearly be used against us. The bill not only fails to tackle the very real problem at hand, it also excludes those most likely to encounter sex trafficking - clients - from reporting it to the police. Trafficking victims do not easily trust people, it takes time to break down those emotional barriers and feel safe confiding in others. You cannot just get them to spill their guts at the drop of a hat, we must rely on those who are most likely to encounter and form connections with those being trafficked.

As sex workers have said, time and time again; lumping moral crimes - particularly prostitution- In with other criminal offenses just further perpetuates and even creates more tools to extort and abuse sex workers and sex trafficking survivors. H5358 continues to not only harm our community, but it also fails to offer immunity from the most commonly charged prostitution-related misdemeanor, Massage Without a License. These charges make up as much as 81% of prostitution-related misdemeanors; resulting in Asian spa workers being disproportionately targeted, abused, and met with violence at the hands of local police, homeland security, and mass shooters.

I ask that you stop Prioritizing some people's moral discomfort with sex workers or sex trafficking survivors and instead prioritize the safety and well being of one of our most vulnerable populations. People who have been victims or witnesses of heinous crimes and reported them to the police should not be charged with a misdemeanor for trying to stop abuse. They should not be punished for trying to survive.

During a previous testimony for H7165, an out-of-state special interest group testified that Asian spa workers don't need immunity because they plan to ask the Attorney General's Office to not prosecute spa workers for reporting crimes. This demonstrates an incredible ignorance of the Rhode Island context, where police act as prosecutors in misdemeanor cases. In 2021 the Rhode Island Attorney General used the state RICO law to seize \$650k from Grace Kwon, an Asian Spa worker. The money was divided between the Pawtucket Police

Department and the Attorney General's Office. It is not reasonable to think that police or prosecutors will begin to go against their own financial interests because they are asked nicely.

H5358 would have devastating and violent consequences for sex workers and sex trafficking victims. You cannot claim to care about the lives of the people while pushing a bill that would hurt and endanger them. This bill would have very serious and very violent consequences for sex workers and sex trafficking survivors.

Protect us, don't further the abuse of innocent people. vote NO on H5358

Sincerely,  
Jen Lamoureux  
Pawtucket, Rhode Island