



February 24, 2025

The Honorable Robert Craven Sr., Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL NOS. 5359 & 5360– RELATING TO CRIMINAL
PROCEDURE – SEARCH WARRANTS – INDICTMENTS, INFORMATION AND COMPLAINTS – BILL
OF RIGHTS ENHANCEMENT & ELECTRONIC INFORMATION AND DATA PRIVACY ACT**

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, we proudly support House Bills 5359 and 5360, which advance equity and social justice for all Rhode Islanders. Through the ADVOCATE UNITED initiative of our LIVE UNITED 2025 Strategic Plan, we are dedicated to breaking down systemic barriers and championing policies that advance racial, social, and economic justice in every community.

House Bills 5359 and 5360 are crucial to building an inclusive Rhode Island by strengthening the constitutional protections of all individuals in the realm of criminal procedure. HB 5359 requires that law enforcement obtain explicit consent before deploying audio or video recording devices on private property—ensuring that our Fourth Amendment rights are fully respected. Meanwhile, HB 5360 mandates that a search warrant be secured prior to accessing electronic information and prohibits the use of invasive cell-site simulators, which have been linked to unwarranted surveillance. National research from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 2021) indicates that such surveillance tools are often disproportionately used in communities of color, contributing to systemic inequities and eroding public trust.

Moreover, these bills foster a culture of accountability and transparency that is essential for restoring confidence in our criminal justice system. Data from a 2020 report by the Brennan Center for Justice demonstrates that minority communities are significantly more likely to experience invasive surveillance practices, a trend that undermines both civil liberties and community safety (Brennan Center for Justice, 2020). By mandating rigorous, disaggregated data collection and enforcing strict procedural safeguards, House Bills 5359 and 5360 will provide policymakers and community stakeholders with the evidence needed to implement targeted reforms—ensuring that law

[Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.](#)

enforcement practices align with the values of fairness, respect, and accountability.

Equity is the foundation of a just society. Supporting House Bills 5359 and 5360 will help ensure that all Rhode Islanders have a fair, safe, and transparent engagement with local law enforcement. This legislation is vital to creating a more inclusive and just Rhode Island where community safety is prioritized and every individual can thrive. We strongly encourage your support in advancing policies that promote social justice and reform, enhancing both racial equity and public trust in our law enforcement practices.

Sincerely,

Elijah McLean

Manager, Government Relations & Policy

United Way Rhode Island