

Roberta DiMezza

From: Jenifer Stark <jen@jeniferstark.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 6:13 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Support for House Bill 5502

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I am writing to express my support for House Bill 5502 that would change the maximum prison sentence for a misdemeanor offense from one year to 364 days.

By making a one-day change in the definition of “misdemeanor,” this bill would protect hundreds of Rhode Islanders from unnecessary, harsh immigration consequences.

It is important to note that, under this bill, judges will still have the discretion to impose prison sentences up to 364 days instead of 365. Passing this legislation would help protect vulnerable members of our immigrant community, including asylum seekers and victims of domestic violence, who otherwise could be barred from immigration relief due to a misdemeanor conviction.

States like New York, Washington, and Nevada have already amended their criminal codes in recent years in this way to protect their residents against harsh immigration consequences. **We urge the Committee to approve this legislation** and protect the state’s immigrant community from the harsh consequences of federal law for instances of minor misconduct.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jenifer Stark
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