

April 3, 2025

House Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island General Assembly  
Providence, Rhode Island

**Re: Support for H 5180**

To the Honorable Chair Robert E. Craven, Esq. and the Honorable Judiciary Committee Members::

We as the Formerly Incarcerated Union of Rhode Island are writing to express our strong support for Bill #H5180, titled "AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINALS -- CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS -- PAROLE." This bill would require that at least one member of the parole board be a person directly impacted by the criminal justice system, who has successfully completed the probation or parole process at least three years prior to selection, and who possesses a professional background in specified fields.

As Rhode Islanders who have been directly incarcerated by the criminal legal system we can see firsthand the challenges faced but also the opportunities for people directly impacted by the criminal legal system. Because of this proximity to the experience of potential parolees we can provide a deeper perspective and understanding when a person who has been incarcerated made important steps toward accountability and rehabilitation.

Many formerly incarcerated Rhode Islanders lead very productive and meaningful lives doing important work in the community, that include individuals with law degrees, licensed clinical social workers, licensed educators, even elected officials. Many individuals had worked hard to rehabilitate and turn their lives around. This unique experience and perspective we believe is an important role to the parole board, one that could add safety, trust and improved justice to the system.

For those reasons and many more we, the members of the Formerly Incarcerated Union of Rhode Island, are supporting H 5180 and ask this committee to seriously consider voting H 5180 out of committee and onto the House Floor for a full vote.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dawn Trimble, Co-Founder, Board of Director  
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