



545 Pawtucket Ave, Pawtucket RI 02908

April 10rd, 2025

House Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

### **Testimony in Support of HB - 5724**

My name is Catarina Lorenzo. I am giving testimony on behalf of the AMOR Network.

AMOR supports Senator Acosta's bill S-0295 that would prohibit municipalities from using public resources to establish contracts with ICE.

**Folks detained at the Donald W. Wyatt Detention Facility report various forms of neglect named by previous members of our community.**

My testimony will focus on experiences of Racism and Arbitrary Punishment at the Wyatt.

Since the beginning, people imprisoned at Wyatt have reported a prison administration which inhibits communication between those detained through recreation times reduced to one hour per day and divided into non-overlapping schedules. Recreation times are also weaponized to occur at times of the day when working family members are less likely to be able to receive phone calls, causing people detained to wait a week or more to speak to a spouse or other sources of support on the outside.

Upon expressing grievances, people detained have reported abuse through racist and anti-immigrant ridicule and dismissed complaints. Others reported fear of reprisals which further limit communication between people detained and with people outside the prison, including in the form of 24-hour lockdowns. Punitive responses to those calling attention to abuses in ICE detention have been persistent. In 2020, sixty hunger strikers suffered from retaliation through phone access cut off and people put in isolation.

"They left us incommunicado for 2 weeks and they lock us up when the lawyers are about to come. Also when they (inmates) fight in another unit, even if it's not an immigration unit, they (staff) lock us up and yell at us... there is a lot of racism. I wanted to report that to a sergeant and he got to my cell when I wanted to tell him, he closed the door on my face." - Message received March 2025

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- In the first two weeks of March, six people detained detailed discrimination and four specifically described being treated like animals.
- AMOR received reports that the facility has been limiting people's access to the legal program by arbitrarily deciding who can and cannot attend.

The conditions faced by people imprisoned in immigration detention in Rhode Island make clear the ways in which so-called 'administrative' detention is weaponized daily as a form of racialized punishment.

We ask you to consider these points in support of Senator Acosta's legislation S-0295 that would prohibit municipalities from establishing contracts with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Sincerely,

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