

Testimony in support of HB-5724: State Affairs and Government—Detention for Federal Civil Immigration Violations

Dr. Erin Kappeler, 73 Ash St., Lincoln, RI 02865

Date of Hearing: April 10, 2025

To Chair Craven and the Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

I write in support of House Bill No. 5724, which prohibits state and municipal officials or bodies from entering into and renewing any agreements that will be used to detain individuals for federal civil immigration violations.

My husband and I moved to Lincoln, Rhode Island, from New Orleans, Louisiana, in part because we no longer wished to live in an area that relies on prisons and detention centers as forms of economic development. An economy that runs on prisons and detentions centers is a center of immiseration, and ultimately a losing (and immoral) economic proposition.

The Wyatt Detention Center in Central Falls is a prime example of why HB-5724 is needed. The Wyatt is a financial burden to the city of Central Falls. Its history of medical neglect and unsanitary conditions, along with reports of racist and retaliatory actions on the part of detention officers, conflicts with basic humanist values. Please help to make Rhode Island a place where we continue to value fundamental human rights and where we reject for-profit prisons that debase and abuse our neighbors, friends, and loved ones.

Thank you very much for considering my input, and thank you to representatives Giraldo, Alzate, Potter, Morales, Stewart, Diaz, Biah, Tanzi, and Felix for introducing this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erin Kappeler".

Dr. Erin Kappeler

73 Ash St.

Lincoln, RI 02865