

Testimony for Bill HB-5724

Dear Members of the House Judiciary

My name is Ingrid Mejia, case manager of the organization AMOR (Alliance to Mobilize Our Resistance) . We are committed to the defense of human rights, social justice and equality.

We work directly with the immigrant community and the most vulnerable communities. We have witnessed the inhumane conditions faced by detainees at the Wyatt. We would like to highlight some of the main reasons why we are calling for the closure of this facility and the termination of the contract with the private company that manages this facility.

We have received reports of immigrant detainees facing medical neglect, endangering and putting their health at risk. Cases of detainees with diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, mental illness, trauma, dental problems, who need medical treatment and continuous follow up, are not receiving timely attention and their medications are not being supplied there, as well as special studies, thus worsening their health problems and in some cases leading to death. This negligence is a direct violation of their human rights and contradicts the basic principles of human dignity.

Discrimination and abuse are also common practices that detainees at the Wyatt facility face on a daily basis. Many of these detainees from Latino, Afro-descendant, and other vulnerable communities suffer derogatory treatment, often for not speaking the language, and conditions of isolation that further aggravate their suffering. This inhumane treatment is not only unjust, but also promotes a climate of hostility and violence.

One essential issue is the lack of access to communication. Detainees are deprived of communicating with the outside world, having to pay through the police station for calls outside which are excessively expensive and

very short in duration, so these people have no recourse to communicate with their families or to contact legal resources or their lawyers, which severely limits the ability for detainees to defend themselves and access justice.

We recently received complaints about basic hygiene and security conditions. Detainees are unable to bathe for 3 to 4 days due to the overcrowding of the facility's capacity, in addition to having to purchase basic personal hygiene products which also jeopardizes the health and well-being of the detainees.

For all of the above on behalf of the community we call for the passage of this bill BH 5724 to the. It is time for Rhode Island to demonstrate its commitment to human rights and respect for the dignity of all people, regardless of their immigration status.
immigration status.

AMOR appreciates your attention and support in passing this crucial legislation.