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To whom it may concern:

As a Rhode Island resident living in Providence and working throughout the state as a community educator, I strongly support HB 5724 to prevent any new or renewed contracts with ICE detention centers.

The Wyatt Detention Center in Central Falls dehumanizes and neglects people, cutting detainees off from communication with the outside world, failing to meet people's medical needs, and subjecting detainees to racist and anti-immigrant ridicule. These conditions are unacceptable and unjustifiable: no human deserves such treatment. The people detained at the Wyatt are family and community members, and their detention there hurts entire communities of people. The substantial immigrant populations in Rhode Island and in Central Falls specifically are among these most affected communities—ICE detention is in direct conflict with the values of these communities.

I work with many students from immigrant families and I hear them express their fear for their families and communities—no one, least of all 9-year-olds, should be experiencing fear on a daily basis that their family members will be taken from them. Rhode Island must do its part to protect its residents from this very real danger and fear. Passing HB 5724 and prohibiting contracts to detain individuals for civil immigration violations is an essential part of protecting Rhode Islanders and the rich, diverse communities of our state.

Furthermore, we should be investing our public resources in providing real economic support to our communities, rather than detaining individuals in inhuman prisons and detention centers. The Wyatt is a financial burden to the city of Central Falls, and public resources going to detention centers should be redirected toward meaningful support for small businesses, food access, healthcare access, and other community necessities.

I urge you to pass HB 5724 as a step toward creating a community free of harmful, exploitative immigration detention practices. Thank you.

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