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From: Milo Giovanniello <milokgiovanniello@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2025 2:12 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: written testimony on House bill 5724

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I am writing in support of House bill 5724.

Rhode Island must act to end contracts to detain individuals for civil immigration violations. Such detention is unjust and deeply inhumane. States across the country have passed legislation banning private prisons and detention centers, and Rhode Island should follow suit. With the passage of this legislation, RI can join other states in creating a community free of exploitative and inhumane immigration detention practices. No city should rely on prisons and detention centers as a form of economic development.

The Wyatt has a long history of neglect, abuse, and inhumane conditions and must be closed. On April 4th, 2020, 60 people detained by ICE at the Wyatt launched a hunger strike to demand safer conditions and their release amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The Wyatt staff responded by retaliating against the hunger strikers by cutting off phone access and placing people in isolation.

People navigating their immigration case should be able to do so with their loved ones and in community, not behind bars in immigration detention. The Wyatt is a dangerous and inhuman place to be, and no one deserves to be detained there.

Please pass House bill 5724 to end exploitative and inhumane immigration detention practices in Rhode Island.

Thank you,

Milo Giovanniello, Providence resident