



February 11, 2026

Subject: SEIU 1199NE testimony in support of H-7208 (Electronic Data Privacy)

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing on behalf of SEIU 1199NE, a labor union representing approximately 7,500 healthcare, home care, and child care workers across Rhode Island, to express our strong support for H-7208.

This legislation comes at a time of growing concern among our members and the communities they serve about the expanding use of digital surveillance tools by federal immigration authorities. Across the country, enforcement agencies are using location data and other electronic information to identify and locate individuals for detention, including workers in healthcare and long-term care settings represented by SEIU affiliates.

SEIU 1199NE represents a diverse workforce that includes many immigrants and individuals from mixed-status families. Our members work in hospitals, nursing homes, home care, and family child care — sectors that rely heavily on immigrant workers. Many family child care providers operate businesses out of their homes, and home care workers travel throughout the community to serve vulnerable Rhode Islanders.

When workers see colleagues in these industries taken into custody and believe that digital data was used to locate them, the effect is immediate and profound. Workers become afraid that their phones, their daily routines, or even the locations where they work or operate home-based businesses could be used to track them. That fear causes some workers to stay home, close their programs, or leave these professions altogether.

But the chilling effect extends beyond the workforce. Immigrant parents may become afraid to bring their children to family child care providers. Individuals may delay or avoid seeking medical care, decline home care services, or cancel visits out of concern that their location or personal information could be used against them. When people are afraid to access care or child care, the consequences affect public health, child safety, and the ability of families to work and support themselves.

H-7208 is an important step for Rhode Island to respond to these concerns. By requiring a warrant before sensitive electronic data can be accessed and by providing Rhode Islanders with the ability to seek relief in state court, the bill establishes clear limits and meaningful accountability. At a time when digital surveillance and enforcement practices are expanding, it is common sense for Rhode Island to ensure that strong privacy protections exist at the state level.

These safeguards reflect a basic principle: access to a person's digital life should require judicial oversight. Establishing these protections in state law reinforces constitutional standards, provides a clear remedy for Rhode Islanders, and helps ensure that workers and the families who depend on them feel safe accessing and providing essential services.

For these reasons, SEIU 1199NE respectfully urges the Committee to support H-7208.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alex Moore
Political Director
SEIU 1199NE
amoore@seiu1199ne.org
678-910-3378