

To the House Committee on Judiciary:

I'm writing to express my support for House bill 7198, the 364 bill. This bill would slightly redefine felony and misdemeanor to ensure that the punishments being served are not unjustly punished.

This bill would remove from the definition of felony those offenses which only carry a fine above a certain threshold but no prison sentence, thus ensuring that individuals are not designated as felons for a fine-only offense and do not need to encounter the stigmatizing collateral consequences that a person serving a lengthy prison sentence for more severe crimes would.

This legislation would also change the maximum prison sentence for a misdemeanor offense from one year to 364 days, addressing a conflict between federal immigration law and Rhode Island law under which an immigrant, even someone with a green card, who is convicted of an offense punishable by sentence of a year or more may be deported. Dropping the maximum sentence for a misdemeanor by one day would ensure that undocumented individuals are not subject to unnecessary and harsh immigration penalties for misdemeanor offenses.

Please support HB7198. Thank you.

Alex Denisevich