

Andrew Ho
Regarding House Judiciary Committee
March 4, 2026

Good afternoon, Chairman McEntee and members of the House Judiciary Committee. My name is Andrew Ho, and I am a first-year at Brown University studying Political Science. In addition, I am also the secretary of Brown's ACLU chapter. I am writing to testify in favor of House Bill 7198, which would decrease the maximum sentencing for a misdemeanor from 365 days to 364 days. Since the federal government can legally deport immigrants who are sentenced to a year or more in prison, this bill would provide a safety net for immigrants who make small legal mistakes.

Of the many immigrants in the Brown community, some are still waiting to receive their green cards. With anti-immigrant sentiments on the rise, it is difficult for students in the immigrant community to feel safe. Without the protection of the 364 Day Bill, courts have the power to legally deport immigrant students on the basis of actions such as trespassing or speeding. Some of my closest friends at Brown are immigrants, and having a fear of imminent deportation adds to already high stress levels from workload and extracurricular activities. Deportation would ruin the life that they have worked so hard to build at Brown, and it would also interrupt important relationships or opportunities that could otherwise change the course of their life. In order to assist immigrants' mental well-being and preserve their current lives, this bill must be passed.

In addition, as a third-generation Taiwanese-American, I understand the value and power of immigrants. My grandparents arrived in the United States with little money and little ability to speak English. Nevertheless, they worked hard to make a life for themselves. Their experience exemplifies the United States as a land of opportunity, and it ought to remain so. In order to fulfill this mission, the United States must give grace to immigrants who make a mistake. It is difficult for anyone to adjust to a new set of cultural norms, let alone find a job and make a living. As the law currently stands, a small blunder could cost an immigrant their chance at a future of stability. Had my grandparents been deported for simply trespassing, they may have been forced to return to the oppressive rule of the KMT government in Taiwan, cutting short their opportunity to build a better life and start a family. The 364 Day Bill would extinguish this risk of deportation and give all immigrants the freedom to live out their pursuit of happiness.

As a Brown student and the secretary of the Brown ACLU chapter, I strongly urge you to vote in favor of House Bill 7198. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of this bill. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,
Andrew Ho