

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Victoria Restler. I am a proud Providence resident, parent of two school-aged children and a Professor of Education at Rhode Island College. I am writing to express my support for House Bill 7198 that would change the maximum prison sentence for a misdemeanor offense from one year to 364 days.

Passing this legislation would help protect vulnerable members of our immigrant community, including asylum seekers and victims of domestic violence, who otherwise could be barred from immigration relief due to a misdemeanor conviction. States like New York, Washington, and Nevada have amended their criminal codes in recent years in this way to protect their residents against harsh immigration consequences.

We are living in extraordinary times of state-sponsored racialized violence, xenophobia and cruelty. Each of us needs to do everything we can in our areas of influence to fight back against this brutal regime and protect the most vulnerable among us. I hope you will take this opportunity to step up and approve this legislation and protect Rhode Island immigrant communities from the harsh consequences of federal law for instances of minor misconduct.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony and my recommendation to support House Bill 7198.

Sincerely,

Dr. Victoria Restler