



May 28, 2026

Dear Chair LaMountain, Chair McEntee, and esteemed Judiciary Committee members,

**The Rhode Island Commission on Prejudice and Bias (RICPB) strongly supports 2026 bills [S2047](#) & [H7198](#)**, proposing an amendment to Section 11-1-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 11-1, entitled "General Provisions, commonly known as the 364-Day bill.

Established by law in 1981, the RICPB is a state commission of community leaders, state legislators, law enforcement officers, and Attorney General staff with a mission "to study and report on [and] revise and codify... laws relating to all forms of prejudice, bias and hatred."

A significant aspect of this amendment is the definition of petty misdemeanors, which will encompass offenses punishable by imprisonment for up to six months or fines not exceeding \$500. This adjustment will ensure that individuals are held accountable for lesser offenses in a way that reflects the severity of their actions while avoiding unnecessarily harsh penalties. At the same time, it aligns our legal framework with modern standards of justice, ensuring that penalties are proportionate and reasonable. The bill will enhance the fairness and consistency of our legal system, without penalizing the most vulnerable among us.

Furthermore, the amendment's clarification of the phrase "one year" to mean "three hundred sixty-four (364) days" eliminates ambiguity in how sentences are applied and ensures that all individuals subject to the law are treated equitably, regardless of the technicalities of language. This change avoids triggering harsh federal penalties that can lead to unnecessary deportation.

Overall, this amendment will strengthen the judicial process by providing clearer guidelines for categorizing criminal offenses and assigning appropriate penalties. We believe this change will positively impact our community by promoting justice and fairness for all.

We urge you to consider the long-term benefits of this amendment and support its adoption, and thank the committee for its attention to this important issue. You are welcome to contact us at [calloutprejudiceri@gmail.com](mailto:calloutprejudiceri@gmail.com) or 401-648-9498 for questions or further information.

Sincerely,

B. Joe Reddish, III  
Chair, RI Commission on Prejudice & Bias

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