

**To:** House Judiciary Committee

**From:** Rebecca Silver, PhD

**Date:** 3/2/26

**Re:** Support for H7198

My name is Rebecca Silver. I am a resident of Providence, a mother, and a licensed psychologist specializing in infant and early childhood mental health. I am writing to express support for House Bill 7198 that would change the maximum prison sentence for a misdemeanor offense by one day -- from one year (365 days) to 364 days. This bill is supported by the Immigrant Coalition of Rhode Island, and I urge the House to pass this bill.

Under immigration law, certain minor convictions that are punishable by a year or more in prison may lead to detention, denial of necessary forms of immigration relief, and deportation for immigrants. By making a one-day change in the definition of "misdemeanor," this bill would protect hundreds of Rhode Islanders from these unnecessary, harsh immigration consequences. 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.

As I see too clearly in my professional life, harsh immigration consequences have a ripple effect on communities, families, and children. We must do what we can to protect all members of our community. As a Jew, I am grateful to those who stood up for and protected my ancestors, in Europe and as immigrants in the United States, and we must all do the same for our neighbors and friends in Rhode Island.

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

Sincerely,

Rebecca Silver, PhD