



State of Rhode Island
Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos

May 21, 2026

The Hon. Matthew LaMountain
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee

The Hon. Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Judiciary Committee

Re: Letter of Support for S2047 and H7198: An Act Relating To Criminal Offenses -- General Provisions

To Chairs LaMountain and McEntee:

I write to you in support of S2047 and H7198: An Act Relating To Criminal Offenses -- General Provisions. This bill further delineates the definitions of felony, misdemeanor and petty misdemeanor. Specifically, it would change the definition of a misdemeanor to be a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment for more than six months but not exceeding 364 days. It also states that, wherever the term "one year" appears in any provision of the general or public laws, that it be interpreted to mean 364 days.

This bill helps to stabilize communities and protect immigrants from loopholes in our criminal justice system without weakening any public safety protections. The classification of a crime can have significant consequences for individuals who are convicted. Felony convictions, in particular, can result in long-term consequences such as loss of civil rights, difficulty finding employment, and limitations on housing and educational opportunities. The one-day difference could provide an enormous benefit to some immigrants and their families by addressing a mismatch in the way Rhode Island law overlaps with federal immigration law.

This bill reflects changes currently proposed or enacted in states across the country, from Colorado to New York to Washington. For these reasons, I urge you to vote this bill favorably out of committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sabina Matos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sabina Matos

Rhode Island Lieutenant Governor

CC: Members of the RIBLIA Caucus