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From: Katie Kleyla <katiekleyla@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 11:33 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Rhode Island Civil Rights Enforcement Act

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Chairperson McEntee and Members of the Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to respectfully urge your support for the Rhode Island Civil Rights Enforcement Act.

This legislation would restore the ability of Rhode Islanders to bring a claim in court when their rights under the Rhode Island Constitution are violated. The Rhode Island Supreme Court has held that many provisions of the state constitution are not “self-executing,” meaning individuals cannot automatically sue to enforce those rights unless the legislature provides a clear legal pathway. As a result, some of our most fundamental constitutional protections currently lack a practical way to be enforced in court. This bill provides that pathway.

Just as important, the legislation would allow Rhode Islanders to pursue claims when federal agents violate rights guaranteed under the Rhode Island Constitution. At a time when federal courts offer very limited remedies for violations committed by federal officers, creating a state-level path for accountability is increasingly important.

Structuring the bill so that it applies broadly to government actors also matters from a legal standpoint. By covering government agents generally rather than targeting any one group, the legislation avoids the kind of constitutional challenge that recently arose in California, where a law aimed specifically at ICE agents was struck down in [U.S. v. California](#) on the grounds that it singled out federal officers.

In short, rights should have remedies. If the Rhode Island Constitution promises certain freedoms and protections, people should have a meaningful way to defend those rights when they are violated by government actors at any level.

I respectfully ask you to support this legislation and help give real effect to the guarantees contained in the Rhode Island Constitution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie Kleyla

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