

House Committee on Judiciary
State of Rhode Island General Assembly

March 4, 2026
Testimony in support of House Bill 7360

Dear Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

The effectiveness of our court system depends on the parties involved, including potential witnesses, being able to attend without fear of being arrested for minor infractions. This follows from the fact that these minor infractions are incredibly common. They are, in fact, even more common among non-citizen immigrants, who much follow very complicated protocols in order to stay in the country and someday be considered for citizenship.

My father was an immigrant who lived in this country for many years before gaining his citizenship. During much of this time, he was subject to a long list of complicated rules. For example, he was required to obtain written permission to leave school to visit his family for a weekend. It seems unlikely that he was always precisely following the letter of the law, though I know that he tried.

During this time, he was drafted and, being a life-long Quaker, applied for conscientious objector status. Since his local draft board didn't believe in CO's, his application involved several trips to court. His application was eventually approved and he did alternative service. But he could never have completed this process if every time he had to go to court, he and his family had to worry that he might be arrested for some minor error he'd made, perhaps years earlier.

I know that this is just one example, but obviously, there are many more.

Please keep our court system strong, free from interruptions caused by small issues being blown out of proportion. Please support House Bill 7360.

Sincerely,

Helen G. Grundman
District 1
Providence, RI