

Hello, my name is Asa Spring and I am a teacher in Providence.

I am writing today in favor of SB-2278 and HB-7436. These bills would prevent Rhode Island jails from being used as ICE detention centers and would prevent the Wyatt detention center from working with ICE.

For decades now, and with increasing frequency in recent years, we have seen beloved members of our Rhode Island community detained and deported for civil immigration violations. We have seen many of our neighbors kidnapped by ICE outside of court houses that they were attending in order to follow the letter of the law to the best of their ability.

We have seen ICE detain children, refugees awaiting hearings, and even legal permanent residents who have exercised their first amendment right to say things that challenge the status quo in our country.

I have stood outside the Wyatt and it is truly a harrowing sight to look in and know that there are people inside being detained for civil violations; to see mothers and fathers behind bars not because they are dangerous but because they do not fit with our administration's idea of what America should look like.

These are our neighbors, these are our community members. Anyone I talk to who has grown up in Rhode Island knows Apsara on Public Street. They know the Dominican Festival on Broad Street and the food trucks that line the street, some of the only places you can go to get food late at night. They know Not Just Snacks, Kabob and Curry, India. I could go on and on. I love living in Providence because of my immigrant neighbors. Please help push this bill through so that our immigrant brothers and sisters can stay part of our beloved community. Thank you.