

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brianna Bridges, and I am a medical student at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University in Providence.

I am writing to express my strong support of House Bill 7436, which ensures Rhode Island's state and municipal resources are not used to support federal civil immigration detention or lease public land for that purpose. This is an issue that is critical for patients and public health.

During my training in free clinics and community health settings, I have seen increasing fear among patients. This fear is present among those who are undocumented, but also among mixed-status families and even U.S. citizens. People worry that seeking care could somehow expose them or someone they love to risk. That fear is powerful, and it directly affects health outcomes.

Patients delay appointments, avoid preventive care, stretch medications longer than prescribed, or decline referrals because they are unsure how their information might be used. Fear erodes trust in healthcare systems and public institutions. When trust declines, health outcomes suffer.

As medical students, we are taught that health is shaped by social conditions like family stability, housing, access to care, and trust in institutions. Immigration detention undermines these foundations. It worsens mental health, disrupts treatment for chronic illness, and destabilizes families. Even brief detention can create lasting trauma, not just for individuals but entire communities.

This bill is about protecting health, dignity, and trust in our systems. When communities feel safe accessing care and public services, everyone benefits. Effects range from higher vaccination rates to fewer preventable ER visits. Trust is essential to public health.

H 7436 would ensure that Rhode Island's public resources are not used in a way that is detrimental to the health of our families and communities. While immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility, how we use our public institutions is up to us.

I hope to practice medicine in a state that prioritizes dignity, trust, and community wellbeing. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support H 7436.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brianna Bridges