

I'm writing to urge you to support House Bill No. 7436.

The Wyatt Detention Facility is a financial burden to the Central Falls community. The facility does not pay property taxes that Central Falls depends. If a business operating on that land paid property taxes, it would generate significantly more stable and beneficial revenue for the city than the Wyatt does. Meanwhile, the social and moral costs continue to mount.

Beyond the financial impact, the record of conditions inside the Wyatt is deeply troubling. There is a documented history of medical neglect and unsanitary conditions. People detained report being denied necessary medicine and vaccines. These are not minor oversights, they are life-threatening failures. There are also serious concerns about access to communication. People in ICE detention are often far from their families and legal support systems. Inflated costs drain the limited resources of immigrant families who are already struggling. Equally disturbing are reports of racist and anti-immigrant ridicule by prison administrators and threats of punitive reprisal against detainees who attempt to voice grievances.

ICE detention contracts also conflict directly with the values of our state. Rhode Island is home to a vibrant and diverse immigrant community. In cities like Central Falls and beyond, immigrant families are our neighbors, small business owners, students, and essential workers. Our policies should reflect our commitment to inclusion, fairness, and human rights, not reinforce a system that separates families and subjects people to dangerous and inhumane conditions.

The City of Central Falls wrote in a 2019 letter:

"The detention of these recent arrivals at the Wyatt beginning in March, 2019 is abhorrent to the ethos of the City, a predominantly immigrant and first generation American city. This is apparently yet another desperate attempt by the administration of the Corporation and the other special interests associated with the Wyatt designed to put money in the pockets of bondholders."

(Source: <https://www.centralfallsri.gov/legal/page/central-falls-wyatt-detention-facility-corporation>)

I respectfully urge you to pass this bill and ensure that our state no longer contracts with ICE for detention services. Thank you for your time and consideration.