

Dear Chairwoman Hagan McEntee, First Vice Chairman Knight, Second Vice Chairman Dawson and other members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing as a resident of Rhode Island and in support of bill H-7436, an act banning ICE contracts.

States across the country have passed legislation banning ICE contracts in their state/municipal prisons: Illinois (2021), Colorado (2023), Oregon (1987/2021), Minnesota (2023), and Maryland (2021). New England states such as New Hampshire, Massachusetts and New York have proposed bills to shut down immigration detention in their states. Rhode Island can join them in creating a community free of exploitative and inhumane immigration detention practices.

The Wyatt Detention Center is the only detention center that detains immigrants through its Intergovernmental Service Agreement (IGSA) with ICE. This contract allows ICE to use state and local resources for detention, and prohibiting IGSA contracts would effectively eliminate immigration detention in the state of RI. I am horrified at my taxes being used at the federal level for state sanctioned violence and believe that history will not look kindly on any collusion with ICE, especially during this era.

Wyatt has a proven track record of abuse, inhumane treatment of detainees and retaliation against those who demand better conditions. In 2025, detainees reported neglect to provide medications for conditions, including sickle cell and brain cancer, dirty water causing nausea and diarrhea, and sexual assault allegations. We have the opportunity to align Rhode Island's government with the will of its communities by shutting down this detention center. This contract allows ICE with the infrastructure and permission to continue to kidnap our neighbors, leave babies and children without parents and destroy lives of everyday people in an instant. ICE cannot continue to do this without the cooperation of the detention center and every private company involved. **No city should rely on prisons and detention centers which further the constitutional and human rights abuses inflicted by ICE as a form of economic development.**

People navigating their immigration case should be able to do so with their loved ones and in community, not behind bars in immigration detention. Often people in detention have been living in the U.S. for years, have families here, and are established members of their communities. Today most people in detention have recently arrived in the US and are seeking safety from persecution and death. **Many have strong community ties with loved ones waiting to welcome them to the United States, and those that need support can access it through community-based groups that offer services to help people navigate their immigration proceedings.**

Sincerely,
Erinn Roberts