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From: Fin McDonough <elsmcdonough@gmail.com>
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To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Testimony for Tonight's State House Hearing

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March 4, 2026
House Committee on Judiciary
Providence, RI, 02903

Dear House Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Fin McDonough. I am a Rhode Island student involved in youth advocacy work. I am emailing my testimony in encouragement of support of bill H7436, which would end the ability of Rhode Island institutions to create or renew pre-existing contracts with ICE to detain immigrants.

In this following testimony, I emphasize more than anything the human right of a person, no matter their origin, to be provided with assistance in the immigration process. Not only has it been observed that detention centers cause psychological, physical and financial distress to less fortunate immigrant families, it is also a fact that detainees leave these centers with no support or knowledge of how to navigate our country. It is counterproductive and inhumane to refuse to offer help to immigrants- counterproductive in the sense that an increasing number of immigrant families will be without financial or educational support in a new environment, leading to entire communities in distress, and inhumane in that such detention centers have been widely known to have unsanitary and abusive conditions.

Detention centers such as the Wyatt are not only detrimental in that they do not pay property taxes, taking away from the income of Central Falls, but also as they refuse health care to families, put prices on external communication and clean water, verbally abuse its detainees, and above all, set a violent and prejudiced example toward immigrants in a city with a historically immigrant population. Fear and aversion to undersupported communities will only cause greater divides in the people of Rhode Island and put positive progress as a united people on hold.

I support this bill on behalf of my good Hispanic friends and the immigrants that I share my community with. I understand the gravity of this bill deeply; when I was younger, I was exposed to many political news stories, often of the hardships of immigrants. I knew very early on that I was going to play a part in making a difference in the lives of the wrongfully detained. Now that I am older and able to join organizations that give victims of oppression a platform, I feel a stronger sense of optimism, community and progress than ever before. It is my utmost hope for the state of Rhode Island and beyond that we will continue to recognize the needs of our immigrants, such as literacy, housing and financial aid, and provide an environment where no family has to fear for the safety of their loved ones. Detaining another human being, "legal" or not, before ever thinking for their safety and education, is not a future of Rhode Island that can be regarded as sustainable, peaceful, or safe.

Best Regards,
Fin McDonough
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