

House Judiciary Committee  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI

March 2, 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of House bill 7436 titled RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DETENTION FOR FEDERAL CIVIL IMMIGRATION VIOLATIONS

Dear Chairperson McEntee and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jessica and I am in favor of House Bill 7436 that would prohibit municipalities from entering contracts with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

As a social worker and as a Rhode Island resident, I support this bill because the criminalization of migration through systems of detention and imprisonment is inhumane and does not create the conditions for greater safety for our community.

I could expound on the fact that this contract between Wyatt and ICE has failed on all of its promises, most notably, revenue for the city of Central Falls and increased public safety. I could talk about how 73% of the detained population have no criminal offenses or how almost 95% of the population of Central Falls have negative things to say about Wyatt and its contract with ICE.

Instead, I'd like to talk about my work with children in the state of Rhode Island. I currently act as the social worker and social work coordinator for an agency that assesses and diagnoses children with sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect or intervenes when children have been victimized through domestic minor sex trafficking.

My role is to support the non-offending parents through one of the worst moments of their lives, while simultaneously supporting the victimized child - helping both parties find routes to healing whether it be through therapeutic support, community support, the legal system, or all of the above.

Now, in addition to all the challenges that come with facing a trauma such as sexual violence or physical abuse there is an unnecessary and acutely nefarious violence impacting these families by the refusal of our elected officials to do the right thing, and end this contract. Families are afraid to come forward to receive help due to their immigration status. The risk that comes with stepping foot into a court house, or revealing their immigration status to law enforcement has pushed these families further into the shadows. I cannot look them in the face and promise that they will be safe if they make the decision to enter a court room. I cannot promise them that they will make it home after their appointments with me.

I think it is also important to note that these offenders are not undocumented. In fact, they are citizens who are purposely targeting undocumented minors and families because of the risk of being held at Wyatt that is synonymous with seeking help and justice.

These offenders are taking advantage of your lack of courage to harm children.

Any contract with ICE is a financial failure, public safety failure and a moral and an ethical failure of our state.

I hope you consider these points in support of Senator Acosta's legislation H7436 that would prohibit contracts with the U.S. Immigration and Customs and Enforcement (ICE).