

Wednesday March 4, 2026

Dear Honorable Members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill H7436, which prohibits state and municipal officials from entering into or renewing any agreements used to detain individuals for federal civil immigration violations. This bill directly interferes with federal immigration enforcement and undermines public safety by shielding illegal aliens from accountability. Federal immigration law preempts state interference, and efforts to block cooperation with ICE operations violate the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Rather than obstructing law enforcement, Rhode Island should prioritize protecting its citizens from the threats posed by illegal aliens, many of whom have committed serious crimes.

The bill would prevent Rhode Island from honoring ICE detainers and cooperation agreements that keep dangerous individuals off our streets. These individuals are illegal aliens under federal law (8 U.S.C. § 1325), not “undocumented immigrants.”

Facts from DHS and ICE demonstrate the success and necessity of robust enforcement. Under current policies, southwest land border encounters have reached historic lows, with only 34,631 total nationwide encounters in January 2026—an 87% reduction from the monthly average under the previous administration. For nine consecutive months, U.S. Border Patrol has released zero illegal aliens into the United States, processing every apprehended individual according to law. DHS reports that border crossings have plunged 93% year-over-year, and more than 670,000 illegal aliens have been removed in the first year of renewed enforcement, focusing on the “worst of the worst.” ICE statistics show that approximately 70% of arrests involve illegal aliens with U.S. criminal convictions or charges.

In Rhode Island specifically, ICE has arrested numerous illegal aliens who represent the “worst of the worst” threats to our communities.

- **Vivian Gisselle Soriano-Neto** (Honduran national): Arrested in Providence for two counts of indecent solicitation of a child and trafficking of a minor.
- **Josue Santiago Perez Gomez** (Guatemalan national): Arrested in Portsmouth for patronizing a minor for commercial sex, indecent solicitation of a child, and procurement of sexual conduct for a fee.
- **Unnamed Honduran national**: Convicted of four counts of first-degree child molestation and five counts of second-degree child molestation against a Rhode Island minor; arrested by ICE in Baltimore but linked to Rhode Island crimes.
- **Edilio Agustin-Orellana** (Guatemalan national): Arrested in Providence for five counts of assault with a dangerous weapon, three counts of kidnapping, intimidation, and armed home invasion; previously removed multiple times.
- **Unnamed Honduran national** (23-year-old fugitive): Arrested in Providence; wanted for homicide in Honduras and convicted locally of felony assault with a weapon.
- **Felix Meletz Guarcas** (Guatemalan national): Arrested for sexually abusing a child.
- **Three Portuguese nationals** (aged 32, 25, and 22): Arrested in Pawtucket for child endangerment following the death of a 1-year-old infant under their care.

- **Rigberto Hoyos-Alban** (Colombian national): Arrested in Cranston for sex crimes against a Rhode Island resident.
- **Unnamed Guatemalan national** (55-year-old): Convicted in Rhode Island of first-degree child sexual molestation/sexual assault; arrested in Providence.
- **Unnamed Dominican national**: Arrested for multiple felony drug trafficking charges.
- **Yohan Perez-Chala** (Dominican national): Arrested in Cranston for fentanyl trafficking.
- **Ivan Rene Mendoza Meza** (Honduran national, MS-13 member): Arrested in Providence for fentanyl trafficking; previously released despite ICE detainer.
- **Viroth Phannavong** (Laotian national): Convicted of first-degree child molestation in Providence.
- **Mairelys Indhira Valdez-Nunez** (Dominican national): Convicted of trafficking an adult, pandering, and conspiracy in Providence.
- **Belardis Tapia Gonzalez** (Dominican national): Arrested for second-degree child molestation-sexual assault.

These arrests highlight the real risks illegal aliens pose, including child exploitation, drug trafficking, and violent crimes. ICE has arrested hundreds of illegal aliens in Rhode Island since January 2025 (including 343 as of mid-2025, with 127 convicted criminals and 147 facing charges). Passing H7436 would endanger Rhode Islanders by preventing cooperation that keeps these individuals detained and removed.

As Adam Smith observed in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, “Mercy to the guilty is cruelty to the innocent.” I urge you to reject H7436 and support federal enforcement to keep our state safe.

Sincerely,

Pyara Meyer
Rhode Island Resident
Descendant of a legal immigrant