

Ariana Costa

From: Sherri Simmons <sherrisim50@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 12:03 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee; Rep. Stewart, Jennifer A.
Subject: Written Testimony in Support of HB 7436

Dear Clerk DiMezza,

Please accept the following written testimony in support of House Bill 7436. Thank you.

March 3, 2026

RE: HB-7436

Dear House Judiciary Committee members,

I am writing in support of House Bill No. 7436 Regarding Detention for Federal Civil Immigration Violations.

As I understand it, this bill would prohibit the State and municipalities from the formation of agreements, contracts, leases, etc., with ICE and publicly owned detention centers of any kind in RI and calls for termination of any existing contracts for the stated purpose of detaining individuals for **federal *civil* immigration violations.**

Of course, we are talking about the Wyatt. As a relatively new resident of RI, I have only recently become aware of the long history of the abominable conditions, crimes and human rights abuses that have occurred at this facility. I am appalled at the history of neglect, abuse, lack of medical care, drug trafficking and violence perpetrated on inmates for whom detainment is *necessary*. That, along with allowing the detention of our neighbors at the Wyatt Detention Center for ***civil immigration violations*** for which detainment is *unnecessary*, is the definition of “cruel and unusual punishment.” The bleeding of detainees’ families by charging for the basics to sustain life for their detained individual, such as food and water, and over charging detainees for communications with families is horrific. When the State takes away an individual’s freedom, they are bound by rules of humanity and decency, as well as law, to care for that individual’s physical and emotional health. In allowing Federal ICE agents to contract with the Wyatt, the State of RI is sanctioning the unlawful punishment of individuals being held for federal ***civil*** immigration violations, for whom detainment *is not necessary*, to a maximum security, poorly managed facility rife with civil and human rights violations. The cruelty is the point, and RI is guilty of participating in the cruelty.

Allowing the State, or any municipality, to form relationships with Federal ICE agents to detain as punishment those “suspected” of civil immigration violations is wrong and unnecessary. There are other ways to track and bring those individuals into legal citizenship (ankle bracelets, travel restrictions, home confinement, reporting to court) or deport them, that are not cruel and inhumane. In addition, no RI city, county, or state agency, should rely on detention facility use as a form of “economic development”. This whole situation is appalling. I urge you all to pass HB-7436 and stop the cruel and unusual punishment being rained down on our neighbors.

Sherri Simmons

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