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To: House Judiciary Committee

From: Yolanda Macias, Associate Manager & Co-Founder, Conexion Latina Newport

Date: March 4, 2026

Re: H 7436 – Detention for Federal Civil Immigration Violations

Dear Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Conexion Latina Newport, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 7436, relating to Detention for Federal Civil Immigration Violations.

Conexion Latina works closely with immigrant and mixed-status families throughout Rhode Island. Every day, we support parents, workers, and children who contribute to our communities and local economy while navigating complex immigration systems. We see firsthand the fear and instability that immigration detention causes—not only for individuals detained, but for entire families.

H 7436 would prohibit state and municipal governments from entering into or renewing agreements to detain individuals for federal civil immigration violations, and from leasing public property for use as immigration detention facilities. This is a critical step in ensuring that Rhode Island's public resources are not used to facilitate the civil detention of our neighbors.

Federal civil immigration violations are not criminal offenses. They are civil matters. Yet immigration detention often results in prolonged confinement, family separation, loss of employment, housing instability, and lasting trauma for children. When local or state entities participate in detention agreements, it undermines trust between immigrant communities and local government institutions, including law enforcement, schools, and social service providers.

Our community members are more likely to report crimes, seek medical care, and engage in civic life when they trust that local and state governments are focused on public safety—not on enforcing federal civil immigration laws.

This bill does not interfere with federal authority. Instead, it affirms that Rhode Island will not use its own public facilities or resources to detain individuals for civil immigration matters. It reflects our state's commitment to fairness, fiscal responsibility, and the well-being of families.

We respectfully urge the Committee to approve H 7436 and to stand with Rhode Island's immigrant families by ensuring that our state does not participate in civil immigration detention.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration.

Respectfully,

Yolanda Macias  
Associate Manager & Co-Founder  
Conexion Latina Newport