



Matthew C. Moynihan  
Chief of Police

## South Kingstown Police Department

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March 14, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee  
Chairwoman, House Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

### **Re: Written Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 7439 – ICE Out Act**

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to respectfully submit my written testimony in strong opposition to House Bill 7439, which would prohibit law enforcement agencies in Rhode Island from hiring individuals who previously served as sworn officers with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement after January 20, 2025.

At the outset, I would like to thank you for your continued willingness to engage with law enforcement leaders on important public safety matters. I appreciate the thoughtful consideration you bring to legislation impacting our profession and respectfully ask that you and the members of the House Judiciary Committee reject this bill.

As you know, law enforcement agencies throughout Rhode Island are working extremely hard to recruit the next generation of police officers. My colleagues and I have invested significant time and effort in attracting motivated young professionals who are committed to public service. In recent years, we have also placed a strong emphasis on expanding outreach and opportunities to women and minorities who have historically been underrepresented in the law enforcement profession. The challenge we face is not one of unwillingness to hire diverse candidates, but rather a lack of interest and applications being submitted by young women and minority applicants entering the profession.

To address this challenge, police leaders across the state have devoted considerable resources to mentoring young adults from all backgrounds and encouraging interest in a career in law enforcement. Our goal is simple — to recruit the brightest, most capable, and most motivated individuals to serve our communities.

For that reason, legislation that categorically restricts an entire class of applicants based solely on their previous employment with a federal law enforcement agency is deeply concerning. Hiring decisions for police officers should be based on an applicant's character, qualifications, training, and demonstrated commitment to public service — not solely on their past agency affiliation.

As you may know, I began my own law enforcement career immediately after earning my bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Northeastern University when I was hired as an Immigration Agent with the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). I received extensive federal law enforcement training and served in that role for three years before deciding to pursue a more frontline policing career.

I was later fortunate to serve for 24 years with the Rhode Island State Police, retiring as a Captain. Following my retirement, I served as Chief of Police in New Shoreham and am currently completing my fourth year as Chief of Police in South Kingstown. Over the course of my more than 30 years in law enforcement, I have worked alongside many exceptional law enforcement professionals, including individuals who previously served with federal immigration agencies.

While we have all witnessed troubling tactics and policy debates at the national level regarding immigration enforcement, it is unfair and inappropriate to paint all sworn officers who have served in those agencies with the same broad brush. Many of these individuals are dedicated professionals who entered law enforcement for the same reasons most of us did — to serve and protect the public.

Police agencies in Rhode Island operate under strict hiring standards, comprehensive background investigations, extensive training requirements, and in many cases state and national accreditation standards. Police chiefs and hiring authorities are fully capable of evaluating applicants and determining whether they meet the high standards required to serve in our communities.

Legislation that removes that discretion and prevents agencies from even considering otherwise qualified candidates is unnecessary and, in my view, counterproductive to the very recruitment challenges we are currently working to address.

After more than three decades in law enforcement, I take great pride in ensuring that the South Kingstown Police Department recruits and hires only the highest quality candidates to serve our community. I strongly believe that those hiring decisions should remain with the professional law enforcement leaders responsible for building and maintaining effective police departments.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you and the members of the House Judiciary Committee to reject House Bill 7439.

Thank you for your continued support of law enforcement and for your consideration of my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide any additional information the committee may find helpful.

Respectfully,



Matthew C. Moynihan  
Chief of Police