



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Bill No.: HB7439
An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Law Enforcement Officers’ Due Process, Accountability, and Transparency Act – ICE Out Act

Primary Sponsors: Representatives Alzate, Stewart, Batista, Tanzi, Fogarty, and Kislak

Committee: House Judiciary Committee

Date: March 4, 2026

The Rhode Island Women’s Bar Association (“RIWBA”) supports this bill. RIWBA is a non-profit organization that promotes the advancement of the status of women in the State of Rhode Island and in the legal profession.

The Rhode Island Women's Bar Association **supports** HB7439 (ICE OUT), which prevents state and local officials from hiring ICE officers who were employed by ICE on or after January 20, 2025. As Rhode Island attorneys, we are especially aware of the importance of our local and state law enforcement agencies--and why it is so essential that these agencies hire only well-qualified individuals to fill their ranks. Unfortunately, the relaxed hiring standards currently employed by the federal Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) division of the Department of Homeland Security has resulted in a federal force that would not necessarily meet our rigorous standards. As a result, we have seen ICE officials display conduct that police chiefs across America are "fum[ing]" about.¹

In addition, in order to be most effective, it is imperative that law enforcement agencies have the trust of all members of the local community, regardless of an individual's citizenship status. Due to its heavy-handed tactics employed throughout the country, some of which have been seen in Rhode Island, ICE has squandered any trust or faith the Rhode Island community may have once had in it. In two recent incidents, ICE officials 1) surrounded the car of Superior Court Justice Joseph McBurney and threatened to smash his windows as he was about to give his high-school-aged intern a ride home,² and 2) barreled through the security measures at the Garrahy Judicial Complex in pursuit of two young men, ignoring the local authorities' instructions to stop.³ In the first incident, only the brave actions of Justice McBurney and head of Security Operations Dana Smith prevented the ICE agents from essentially kidnapping the teenaged intern, who, it turned out, was not even the officers' intended target. In the second, the officers created a scene of chaos, fear, and danger as they bypassed security and brought their weapons into a building that is supposed to be secure.

These are not the actions or values that we expect from our state and local law enforcement officials; Rhode Island must hold itself to a higher standard than is currently being employed at the federal level. In order for our law enforcement agencies to ensure their officials police in a fair, ethical, and constitutional manner, it is important that they do not hire officers who have been poorly trained. Accordingly, the RIWBA supports the passage of HB7439.

In essence, RIWBA views HB7439 as a measured and necessary step to safeguard Rhode Islanders. For these reasons, RIWBA respectfully urges the Committee to favorably consider this bill.

RIWBA contact:
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¹ See Shalia Dewan, *'It's just all going down the toilet': Police chiefs fume at ICE tactics*, New York Times (Jan. 20, 2026), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/30/us/its-all-just-going-down-the-toilet-police-chiefs-fume-at-ice-tactics.html>.

² Brian Crandall, *Leaders praise judge, hammer ICE over courthouse incident in Providence*, Channel 10 WJAR News (Nov. 21, 2025), available at <https://turnto10.com/i-team/leaders-praise-judge-hammer-ice-over-courthouse-intern-incident-in-providence-november-21-2025>.

³ Katie Mulvaney, *I was afraid I was going to get shot': ICE pursuit into RI courthouse causes chaos*, The Providence Journal (Jan. 15 2026), available at <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/crime/2026/01/15/ice-agents-rhode-island-courthouse-pursuit/88201358007/>.