

March 7, 2026

House Committee on Judiciary  
State of Rhode Island  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: In Support for House Bill 7206

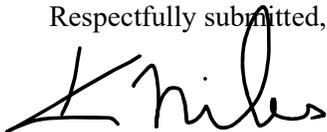
Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing in support of House Bill 7206 because survivors of sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination should be able to come forward without fear of retaliation and weaponized defamation lawsuits. I have been a trauma-focused mental health therapist for the past 15 years, with many victims of sexual assault and harassment on my caseload. Many times, a person will not speak out or seek legal recourse because they fear retaliation and expensive, drawn-out lawsuits that will only further drain them and revictimize them. *This is in fact the goal of many perpetrators of assault and harassment – to inflict harm wherever possible, using the courts to do so.* It is a second form of traumatic injury that can be as complex and devastating as the original, and should not be supported in any form.

If one must make a cost-benefit analysis as well as a moral one (see above), victims of sexual assault, harassment and retaliation take longer to heal (often far longer, as things are dragged out deliberately by the perpetrator), taxing insurance companies, health care facilities (for stress related concerns), and of course the victim him/herself. It further taxes the judicial system, whose time would be better spent on, oh, say, *anything*, than retributive behavior. It never ceases to disgust me how people use the legal system to “solve” emotional problems.

I urge you to pass a favorable report on House Bill 7206. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Niles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "N".

Kate Niles, LICSW  
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