



Rhode Island Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

Weybosset Hill Station, P.O. Box 23101
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
March 9, 2026

Representative Carol Hagan McEntee, Chairperson
House Judiciary Committee
The Statehouse, Room 205
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: House Bill #2026 –8063
HEARING DATE – Thursday, March 12, 2026**

Dear Chairperson McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

The Rhode Island Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (RIACDL) writes in opposition to H 8063, which would amend Rhode Island's child molestation statute to require the approval of the alleged victim before a criminal case may be resolved.

Rhode Island already has a comprehensive Victim's Bill of Rights, codified at R.I. Gen. Laws §12-28-1 et seq., which guarantees victims the right to be informed, to be present, and to be heard at critical stages of a criminal proceeding. These statutes appropriately ensure that victims have a meaningful voice in the process while preserving the fundamental role of prosecutors, defense counsel, and judges in resolving *all* criminal cases.

H 8063 goes far beyond providing victims with a voice. By conditioning the resolution of a serious felony on the approval of a private individual, the bill creates significant ambiguity and shifts core prosecutorial and judicial decision-making authority to non-lawyers who are not charged with administering the criminal justice system. In doing so, it risks undermining the careful balance established by Rhode Island's existing victims' rights framework.

The proposal may also have serious practical consequences. Conditioning plea negotiations or other resolutions on victim approval could create substantial delays and uncertainty in already strained court dockets, potentially preventing the efficient resolution of cases and prolonging the trauma experienced by victims themselves.

For these reasons, and because Rhode Island law already provides robust protections for victims, H 8063 is unnecessary and risks unintended consequences for the administration of justice.

Sincerely,

Kara Hoopis Manosh,
RIACDL President

Camille A. McKenna,
RIACDL President-Elect

President: Kara Hoopis Manosh | President Elect: Camille McKenna | Director of Finance: Angela M. Yingling | Director of Communications: Rebecca Aitchison | Director of Membership: Kelsey McDonald | Executive Committee: Leah Boisclair, Kimberly Chiulli, Daniel. Ciora, Maria Deaton, Michael A. DiLauro, Michael Ewart, Collin Geiselman, Andrew Horwitz, Megan Jackson, John MacDonald, Jason Ollmann,, Sarah Potter

RIACDL is an affiliate organization of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL). RIACDL was founded in 1988 by the late Richard M. Casparian, former Public Defender for the State of Rhode Island from 1988 until his death in 1997. RIACDL's mission includes, "working toward achieving justice and dignity... for persons accused of crime and the criminal justice system, and to influence the criminal law for the betterment of the criminal justice system..." RIACDL is registered with the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Office as a nonprofit organization.