



# 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 –8078**  
***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 to raise a concern regarding H 8078. While we take no position on the bill itself, we respectfully note that the legislation appears to create an appellate right for targets of grand jury proceedings without providing a meaningful mechanism for indigent individuals to exercise that right.

As drafted, the bill requires that an appeal be filed within thirty (30) days. However, there is no clear provision ensuring that indigent targets will have timely access to the Public Defender's Office or court-appointed counsel during that period. Without such an accommodation, many indigent individuals may be unable to secure legal representation in time to pursue the appeal.

An appellate right that cannot realistically be exercised by indigent targets risks becoming illusory rather than meaningful. We therefore encourage the Committee to consider whether additional language is necessary to ensure that indigent individuals have timely access to counsel if the proposed appeal right is created.

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.