

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Melonie Perez <melonie@daretowin.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026 2:55 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** DARE Testimony in Strong Support of H 8116

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Dear Chairperson McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE) respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of House Bill 8116.

For 40 years, DARE has organized low-income families in communities across Rhode Island to fight for social, political, and economic justice. Through our work, we are in constant communication with directly impacted individuals and families—many of whom have loved ones currently incarcerated.

What we hear is deeply concerning.

Again and again, we hear accounts of incidents that take place in the “blind spots” of existing camera systems—areas where there is no footage, no record, and ultimately no accountability. These are the spaces where people report experiencing harm, excessive force, intimidation, or retaliation, with little to no ability to prove what happened.

When there is no documentation, there is no justice.

This lack of visibility not only puts incarcerated individuals at risk, but also leaves correctional staff without protection against false accusations. It creates an environment where truth becomes difficult to verify and trust in the system continues to erode.

Body cameras are a necessary step toward addressing this gap. They help ensure that interactions are documented consistently, not just in fixed locations, but wherever incidents occur. For the families and community members we work with, this is about knowing that their loved ones are not left vulnerable in unseen spaces.

We also want to emphasize that true accountability requires transparency beyond internal systems. The inclusion of independent oversight is critical to building public trust and ensuring that documentation leads to meaningful review and action.

At its core, this legislation is about dignity, safety, and accountability. No one should be subjected to harm in spaces where no one is watching and no record exists.

DARE urges the Committee to pass House Bill 8116.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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