

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Melonie Perez <melonie@daretowin.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026 1:58 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** Strong Support for H 8116 – The Body Cameras for Correctional Facilities Act

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear Chairperson McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Melonie Perez, and I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 8116, the Body Cameras for Correctional Facilities Act.

This legislation represents a critical and long-overdue step toward transparency and accountability within Rhode Island's correctional system. By requiring correctional staff to wear and activate body cameras during key interactions—such as use of force, medical emergencies, transports, and disciplinary proceedings—the bill ensures that incidents are documented in real time and in their entirety.

Too often, what happens behind prison walls goes unseen and unverified. This lack of transparency can lead to harm, mistrust, and a system where accountability is difficult to achieve. Body cameras provide an objective record that can protect both incarcerated individuals and correctional staff, reduce disputes, and support fair investigations.

I am particularly encouraged by the bill's creation of an independent incident oversight board, made up of diverse stakeholders including community members, civil rights advocates, and formerly incarcerated individuals. This is essential. Accountability cannot exist without independent review. Giving the public a role in oversight builds trust and ensures that systems are not simply policing themselves.

Additionally, the bill's requirements around training, reporting, and consequences for noncompliance demonstrate a serious commitment to meaningful implementation—not just policy on paper. The inclusion of a pilot program funded through external grants also reflects a thoughtful approach to rollout, evaluation, and long-term sustainability.

At its core, H 8116 is about dignity, safety, and accountability.

Rhode Island has an opportunity to lead by ensuring that all interactions within correctional facilities are documented, reviewable, and held to clear standards.

I respectfully urge you to pass H 8116.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Melonie Perez  
Behind The Walls Committee Organizer  
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